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Liz Hurley & Billy Ray Cyrus

KATE'S DIGS AT MEGHAN

Insider reveals her surprising behaviour

'My dying son left me a special gift'

Exclusive

JUDY'S SHOCK NEW LOOK

The TRUTH about her two stone weight loss

FERN HITS THE GYM!

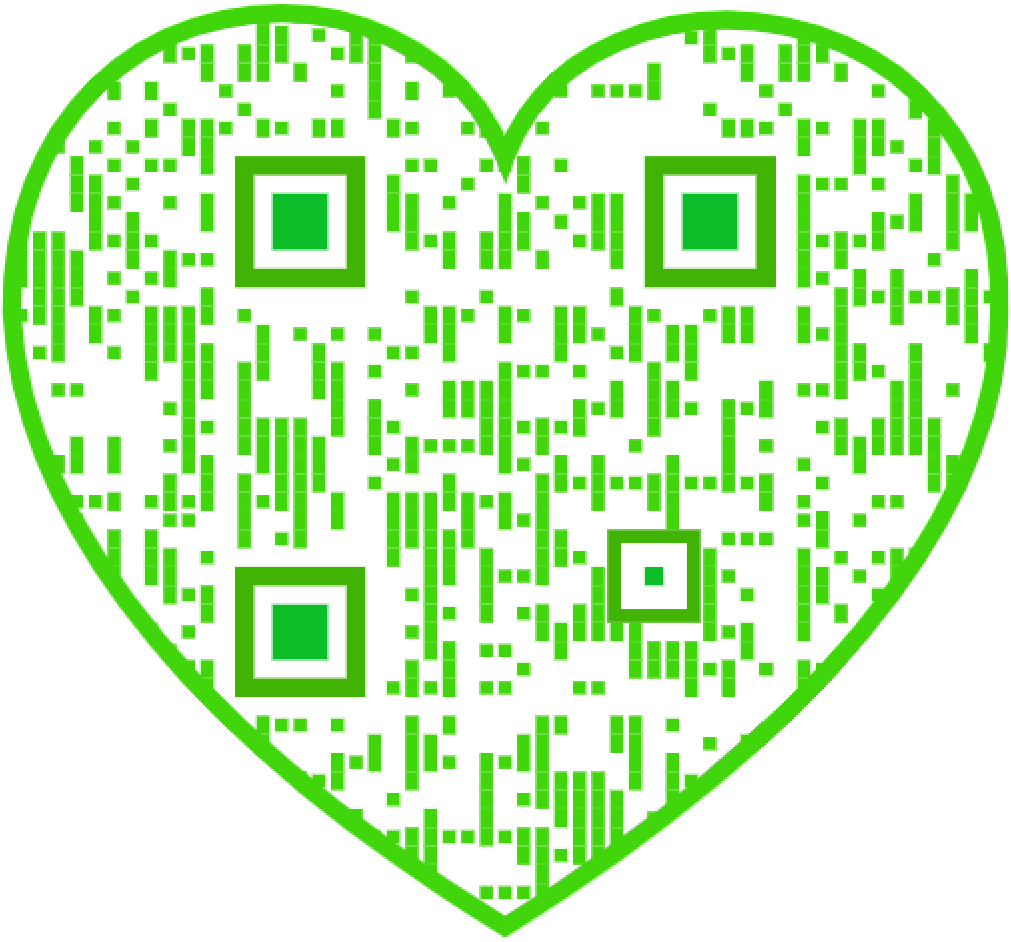
Her amazing figure at 67

Summer style

Home updates from £2.50

BECKS TURNS 50!

His life in pics



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this week in bella

Celebrate VE Day!

It's been 80 years since the historic victory

May marks 80 years since the end of the Second World War in Europe and the nation will be taking part in events up and down the country to celebrate the milestone anniversary.

On 5 May, VE Day celebrations will begin outside Parliament Square in central London, with hundreds of military personnel marching along Whitehall.

After the march, people will be invited to fill The Mall outside Buckingham Palace as a flypast of old and new military aircraft takes place. Hundreds of street parties, barbecues and community events will be held on the Bank Holiday Monday – with an open-air music festival in Blackburn and a VE Day picnic in Shropshire among the highlights.

The following day, an installation of 30,000 ceramic poppies – which first appeared in 2014 to mark 100 years since the First World War began – will return to the Tower of London. And on the evening on 7 May, an anniversary concert will take place at the Palace of Westminster.

On VE Day itself, a service in Westminster Abbey will take place, with 1800 people including veterans, royals and politicians invited to attend. Afterwards, the Royal British Legion will host a private tea party for Second World War veterans and their families at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. Meanwhile, in the evening, a celebration at Horse Guards Parade will take place. We'll see you at a street party!

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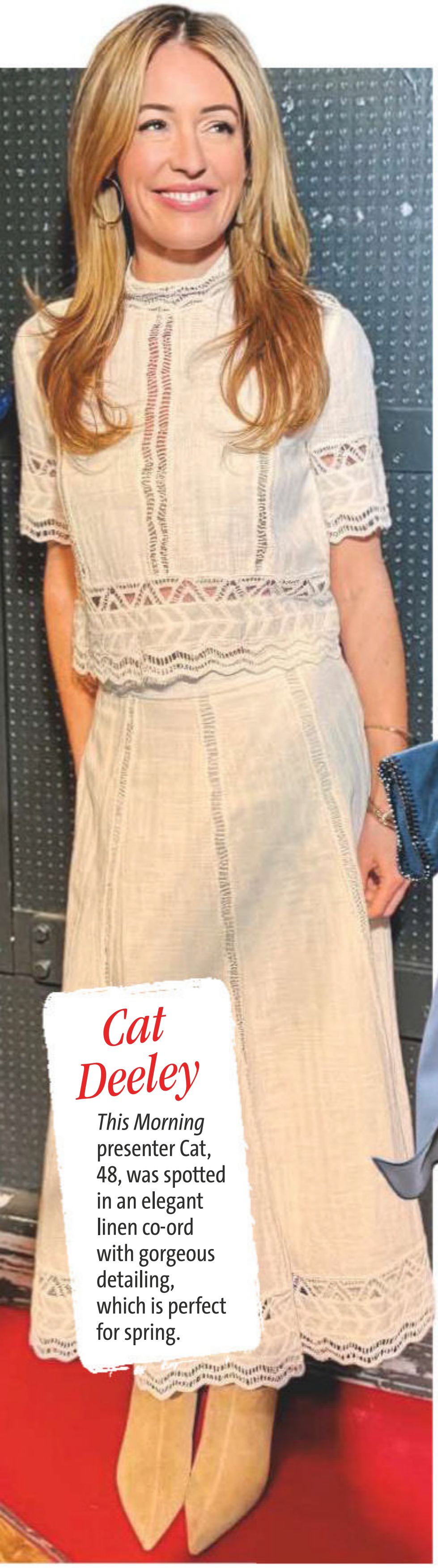
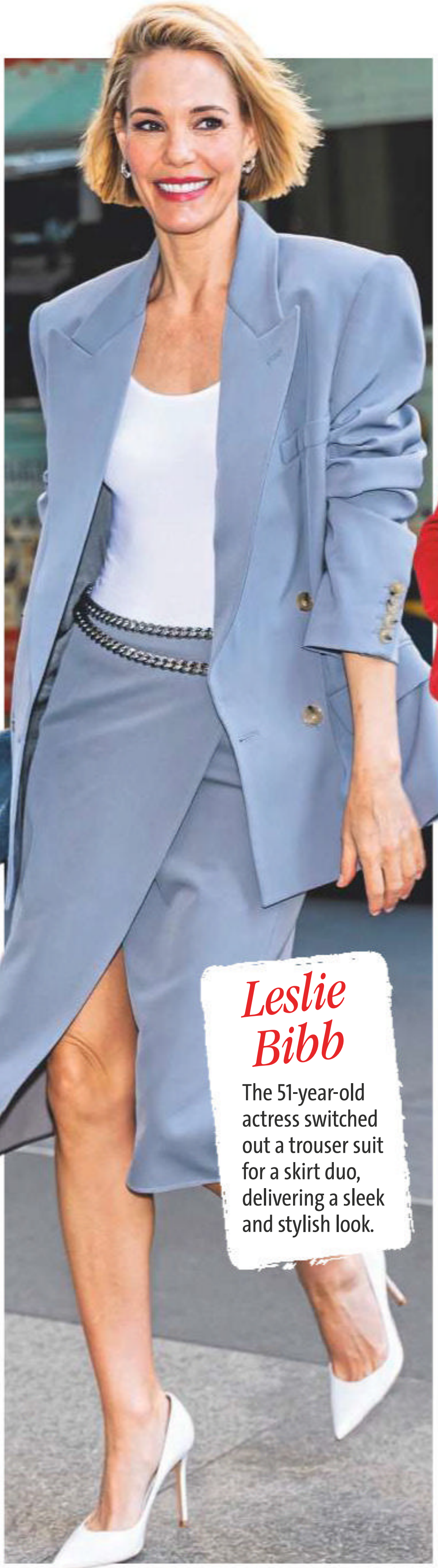
By Samuel McManus, **Pictures** Chris Jackson, Getty Images, Shutterstock
Cover pictures: Getty Images, Shutterstock, Instagram

Marvellous



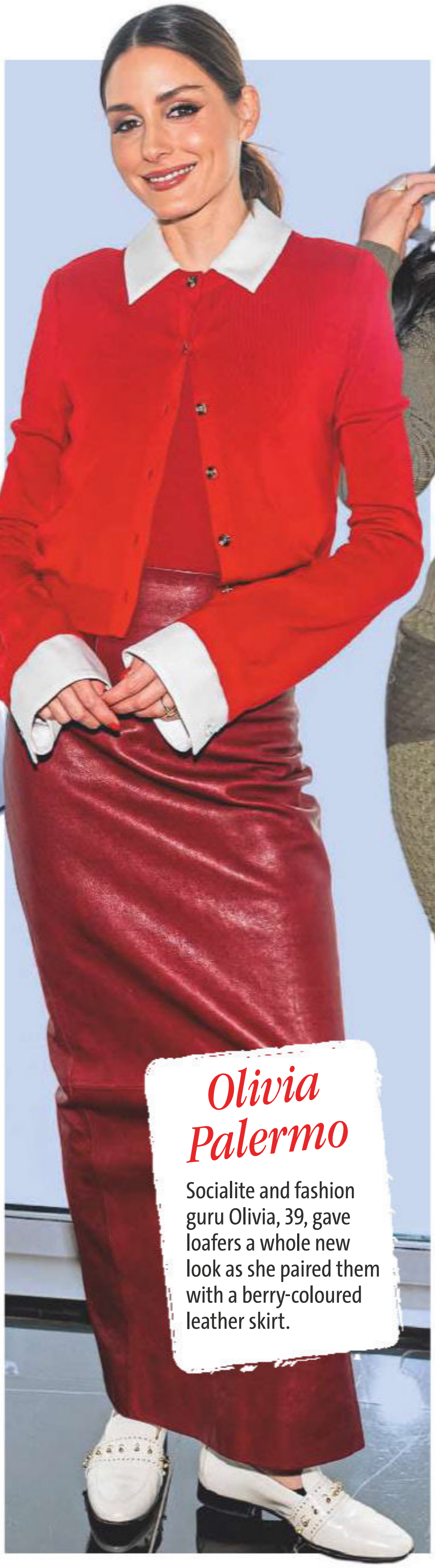
Cat Deeley

This Morning presenter Cat, 48, was spotted in an elegant linen co-ord with gorgeous detailing, which is perfect for spring.



Leslie Bibb

The 51-year-old actress switched out a trouser suit for a skirt duo, delivering a sleek and stylish look.



Olivia Palermo

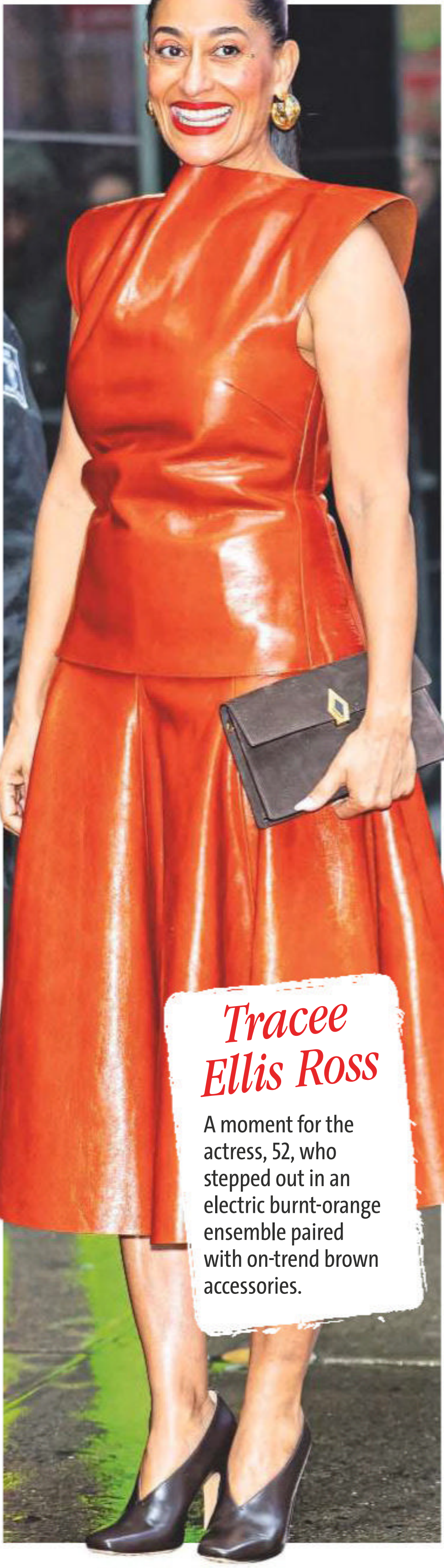
Socialite and fashion guru Olivia, 39, gave loafers a whole new look as she paired them with a berry-coloured leather skirt.

Midis

The A-list are loving the easy staple skirt right now

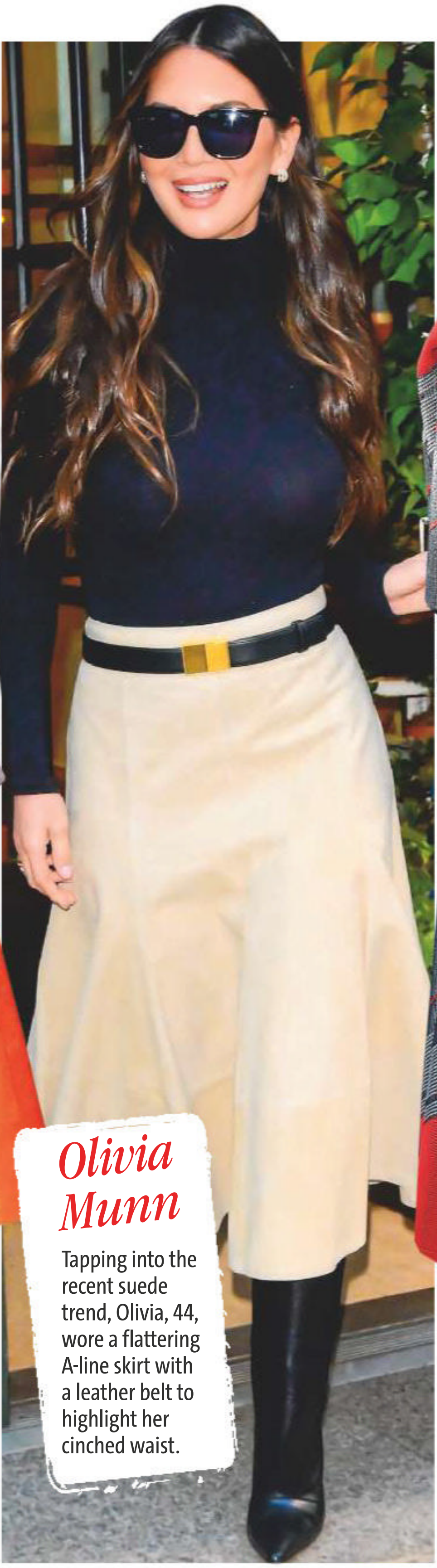
Ashley Graham

Model Ashley, 37, showed us how to rock a beach-to-street crochet skirt with a fun hipster belt.



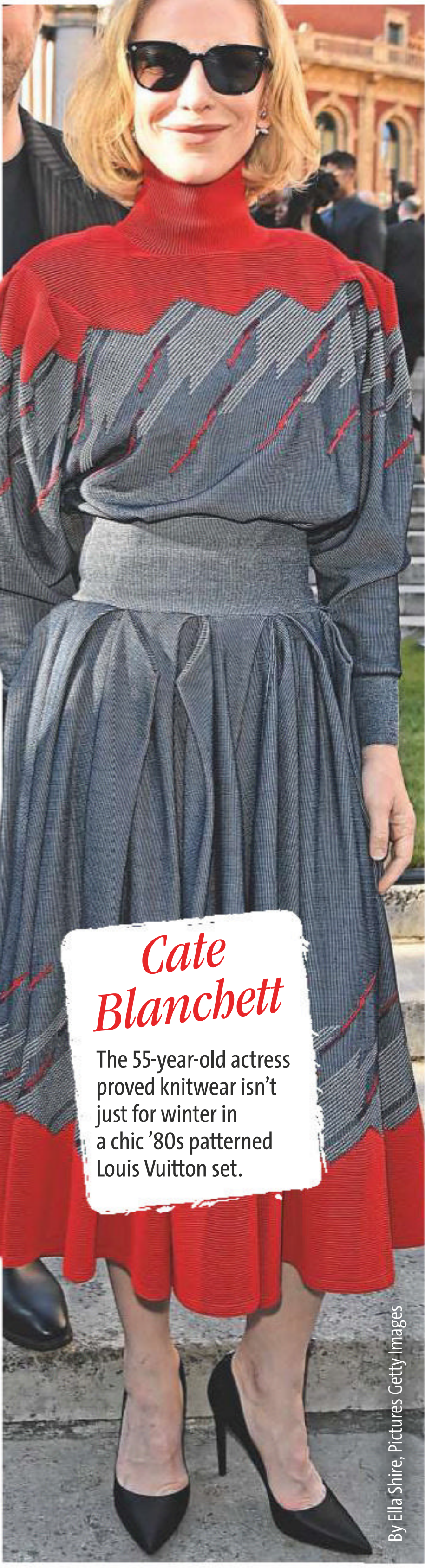
Tracee Ellis Ross

A moment for the actress, 52, who stepped out in an electric burnt-orange ensemble paired with on-trend brown accessories.



Olivia Munn

Tapping into the recent suede trend, Olivia, 44, wore a flattering A-line skirt with a leather belt to highlight her cinched waist.



Cate Blanchett

The 55-year-old actress proved knitwear isn't just for winter in a chic '80s patterned Louis Vuitton set.

By Ella Shire, Pictures Getty Images

CELEB NEWS & GOSSIP

Unlikely romance

Liz Hurley surprised everyone over the Easter weekend, when she shared a photo with new beau, country singer Billy Ray Cyrus.

Billy, 63, wore bunny ears as he kissed actress Liz, 59. While followers may have been shocked by the unlikely relationship, a source says it has been going on for a little while now. 'Liz has been keeping the whole thing under wraps and has barely told anyone. She wanted to make sure there was really something special between them before telling the world. There has always been a spark, but he reached out again last year when his short-lived third marriage ended,' the insider said.

Billy has superstar daughter Miley Cyrus, with his second wife, Leticia Finley. They divorced after 19 years of marriage in 2013, and he went on to marry 34-year-old singer Firerose in 2023. They split just a year later, and Billy faced allegations by Firerose of domestic abuse, which he denied. Could Liz – who he initially met on the set of a Christmas film in 2021 – be the woman to 'save' Billy? She apparently thinks so. The source said, 'He has had a really hard time, but she has been there helping him turn things around. Liz has been really great for him, but her friends are cautious because of what's been said in the past about him. She insists he has turned a corner and is a changed man.'

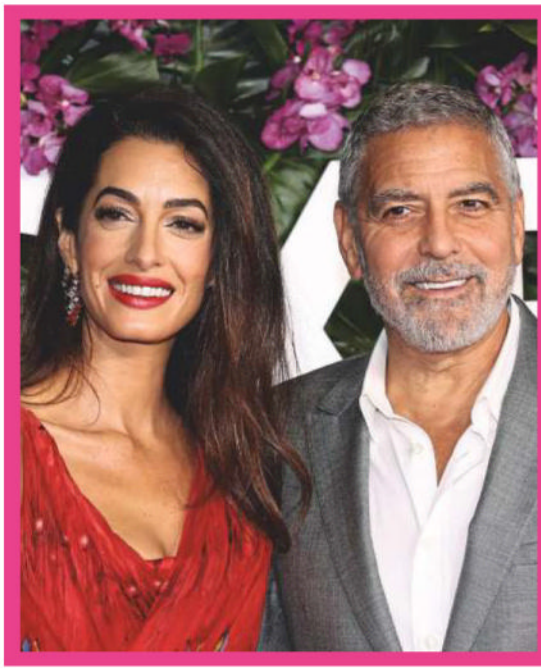
FERN HITS THE GYM

The TV presenter has been 'repowering' ahead of summer

She has been on a journey with her weight, but now Fern Britton has revealed her incredible figure after getting herself back into shape. Fern, 67, recently shared a mirror selfie in her home gym, which was full of weights as she posed behind a barbell in a pink top and gym shorts. She said she was 'Repowering after a sloth-like winter', and the comments on the post were full of compliments as one person said, 'You look incredible Fern! All the hard work has paid off!'

Fern has previously struggled with her weight. Back in 2006 she had a gastric band fitted, which she spoke about publicly two years later, after initially denying it. She said, 'I needed to get healthy. I wasn't happy the way I was.' She dropped from a size 22 to a size 12, and lost five stone. But in 2020, following her split from her husband of 20 years, Phil Vickery, and the heartbreaking death of both her parents, she slipped into an 'era of indolence'. She said, 'It took me about a year to realise that I put a lot of weight on. Looking back, I was in a very bad place and gradually I started to pull myself out of it.'

These days Fern leads a healthy lifestyle, which seems to have helped her achieve her newly trim figure. Along with the weights, she is a keen cyclist and started Couch to 5K again this year. She said, 'New year, new fitness regime. I shall start running again, two or three times a week and I'm going to start cycling again, and will do some weights to get my arms and shoulders a bit stronger again.' Well done Fern!



GEORGE: ‘WE NEVER ARGUE’

They are the ultimate Hollywood power couple, and now George Clooney has revealed that his marriage to Amal really is perfect. During a chat on CBS Interviews, where the pair have appeared together before, George, 63, said, ‘I remember we said we’d never had an argument. We still haven’t. We’re trying to find something to fight about!’ George and Amal, 46, have been married for 11 years, and have seven-year-old twins Alexander and Ella together. Speaking about his wife, George said, ‘I feel so extraordinarily lucky to have met this incredible woman. There isn’t a day that goes by where I don’t think I’m the luckiest man in the world.’

Stacey for Strictly?

Stacey Solomon is reportedly in the running for the next series of *Strictly Come Dancing*, after admitting she’s ‘obsessed’ with the show. BBC bosses are said to have approached Stacey, 35, following the success of her various TV shows on the channel, A source said, ‘Stacey is a hit with viewers thanks to her lovable personality. The BBC always want to showcase their own talent on *Strictly* and Stacey’s show [*Sort Your Life Out*] has already bagged them an NTA. Fans will also love watching her husband Joe Swash in the audience cheering her on every week.’ In 2022, Stacey said, ‘I am obsessed with it. And also I would love to learn a new skill like that.’

By Amy Lo, **Pictures** CAN/Capital Pictures, Getty Images, Instagram, Alamy Stock Photo

WELCOME T
CHILDREN W
CANCER UK
Ball 2022
Grosvenor House
November 12, 2022

Running hero

Record-breaking marathon runner Paula Radcliffe’s daughter, Isla, is following in her footsteps and is running her first marathon, five years after being diagnosed with cancer.

Isla, 18, was shockingly diagnosed with ovarian cancer at the age of just 13 and, after becoming cancer-free, she decided to take on the London Marathon for the first time, while fundraising for Children with Cancer UK. The charity helped their family during tough times and Paula, 51, shared pride for her daughter running the 26.2-mile race saying, ‘Isla wants to make a difference – she just came out and told me she is doing it. It will be wonderful.’

WEEK IN PICS

Happy birthday, Louis!

Prince Louis’s 7th birthday was marked with a new picture – this time not shot by his mother the Princess of Wales. Showing him without his front teeth, the photo, taken by Josh Shinner, was captioned, ‘Wishing Prince Louis a very happy 7th birthday!’ And from all of us at *Bella* too!

Baby no.2

Olly Murs and wife Amelia have announced the happy news they’re expecting a second baby. The couple had daughter Amelia just last April and Olly, 40, said, ‘It’s been really exciting news’, but ‘a shock, we didn’t expect it to happen this quick.’

Simply the best

Fleur East is taking on the role of the iconic Tina Turner in the West End musical, *Tina*. Fleur, 37, said, ‘What an honour to play such an incredible woman. As a performer... I’ve definitely channelled Tina over the years.’

Exclusive

Meghan's new upset OVER KATE

Ongoing attempts at a royal reconciliation don't seem likely after the Sussexes felt slighted once again

Kate is said to not want a reconciliation

Prince William and Princess Kate's ongoing tensions with the Duke and Duchess of Sussex appear to show no signs of easing, despite claims that Prince Harry and Meghan are ready to make amends.

It had been claimed the Sussexes have extended an olive branch, hoping to be allowed back into the royal fold. However, the source says the Prince and Princess of Wales – who recently spent the Easter holidays with their children in their private home in Norfolk, before heading to Scotland to celebrate their 14th wedding anniversary this week – have rejected their attempts at a return.

Relations have been further strained by what insiders describe as a surprising series of subtle digs from William and Kate. Among the most pointed was their support of Prince Harry's ex-girlfriend Chelsy Davy, whose jewellery line Aya recently launched a new collection.

'It fanned the flames'

Pieces from Davy's Aya line were sent to Kate, and Princess Charlotte wore a ruby-red necklace from the brand during the family's appearance at the Christmas Day church service at Sandringham.

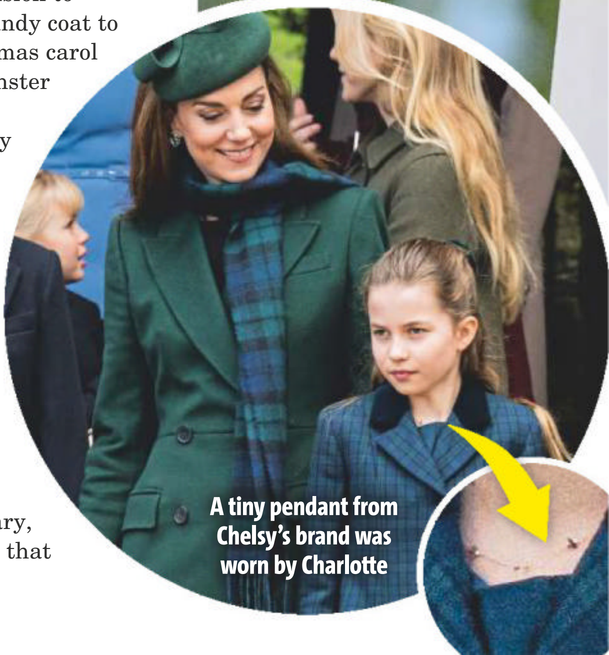
The necklace, reportedly a gift from William and Kate, was seen as a deliberate slight by Harry and Meghan, with sources suggesting the move 'infuriated' the couple. Davy, once seen as a potential royal bride, was in a long-term relationship with Harry from 2004 to 2011, long before he met and settled with Meghan.

'Princess Charlotte has worn pieces from Davy's brand, which sparked frustrations within the Sussex household,' said the source.

'The move was perceived as deliberate and only fanned the flames rather than help bring them closer together.'

Other perceived digs include Kate's decision to wear a deep burgundy coat to her annual Christmas carol concert at Westminster Abbey. The colour choice came shortly after Meghan, in the couple's Netflix documentary, explained she had avoided bright colours so as not to clash with senior royals.

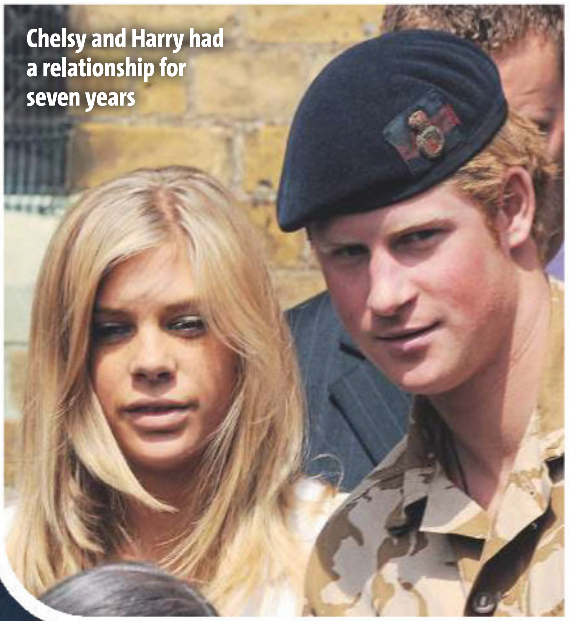
In one episode of the couple's Netflix documentary, Meghan explained that



A tiny pendant from Chelsy's brand was worn by Charlotte

By Nathan Kay, Pictures Getty, Instagram, Alamy

Meghan is said to feel slighted



Chelsy and Harry had a relationship for seven years

Chelsy's jewellery brand recently launched a new collection

her usual colour palette of 'camel, beige, white' was a deliberate choice adding she thought senior royals should not wear the same colour.

At the Christmas event, several members of the royal family – including Zara Tindall and even Princess Charlotte – wore shades of burgundy, a move interpreted by some as coordinated and a direct response to Meghan's comments.

'Meghan's comments about royals not wearing the same colour proved quite a comedy moment for the women in the royal family,' said the source.

'Because of that, they decided to turn up at the next event in the same colour. The move didn't go unnoticed on the other side of the pond.'

'The move didn't go unnoticed'

Another moment flagged as a possible thinly veiled swipe came during a royal engagement in Liverpool, shortly after the release of Harry's memoir *Spare* and a series of TV interviews. While visiting a hospital, Kate commented, 'Talking therapies don't work for some people, they're not for everybody. It's so important to have a range of therapies.'

In *Spare*, Harry credits therapy with helping him process difficult emotions and prevent family tensions from escalating physically. He wrote, 'I can pretty much guarantee today that if I wasn't doing therapy sessions like I was and being able to process that anger and frustration that I would've fought back, 100 per cent.'

More recently, in February, Kate appeared to overshadow Meghan's business efforts by discussing her own homemade plum jam shortly before the launch of Meghan's artisan brand.

During a visit to Meadow Street Community Garden in Pontypridd, the Princess offered to share her plum jam recipe with young gardeners. 'I'll send you my recipe so you can try it,' she told the group.

'Let's just say this move, along with using Chelsy's jewellery line, is what stings the most,' said the source. 'Going after businesses and ex-girlfriends is low. It hasn't flown under the radar.'

The incidents have reportedly left Harry and Meghan rattled, with their hopes for reconciliation now appearing increasingly unlikely.

'Harry and Meghan have been open to a reconciliation in recent years,' said the source. 'But it hasn't gotten past William or Kate. They feel there is too much water under the bridge and damage done to be able to come back from it.'

The burgundy outfit that was said to be a dig

Exclusive

JUDY'S NEW LOOK

Fans ask secret to her amazing new figure

In recent years Judy's weight has yo-yoed

It's hard to believe Judy Finnigan is 76 in these gorgeous pictures of her enjoying the spring sunshine with husband Richard Madeley. Snapped out and about in north London, the TV legend's newly longer hair and her fashionable outfit, with coat slung over her shoulders and bold-print trousers, add to her youthful appearance.

But it's her weight loss that's sparked online discussion, with fevered speculation that she's taking one of the weight loss 'wonder' drugs currently sweeping the showbiz world.

One said, 'She's obviously lost weight… maybe with some help.' Another wrote, '…probably on Ozempic or whatever that weight loss drug is called'. And yet another asked, 'Diet jabs?'. Several fans worried that she was looking downcast, with one upvoted comment reading, 'I think she looks a sad soul.' We can reveal that while Judy has *not* been taking medication such as Ozempic or Mounjaro that are behind the shrinkage of many a Hollywood body, there is some truth in her muted mood.

'She loves having a big family'

Chloe has been a driving force behind her weight loss

Doting mum Judy has been deeply affected by daughter Chloe's shock marriage split in September 2023. Fitness and diet coach Chloe admitted that the last few months with former rugby player James Haskell, 40, were 'dark', 'painful', 'incredibly scary' and 'the worst period of my life'. No wonder Judy was concerned for the emotional welfare of her youngest child and her beloved granddaughter Bodhi, who turns three this August.

A source close to the family told us, 'Judy was very stressed about the break-up of Chloe and James and has been worried about her daughter. She loves being a grandmother and having a big family and hated seeing Chloe heartbroken and upset. She's also been anxious about what effect it would have on her grandchild.'

But although Judy did lose weight from the stress, our source

Judy looked significantly slimmer while out in London

says she'd already kick-started her health as it became increasingly clear Chloe, 37, was heading for divorce.

'Judy embarked on a fresh start approach to her weight loss not long after her last granddaughter was born. With Chloe's five-year marriage falling apart, Judy needed to step up and help, so her daughter's fully qualified expertise helped. She put Judy on a revised program of eating and exercise – including reduced daily calorie intake managed by smaller portions, little and more often, plus regular exercise. By doing this, Judy has seen the pounds fall away – she's lost two stone!'

Our source tells us, 'Judy has had a few underlying medical issues over the years, and losing weight has had a significant impact on her body and general health. She's said it before: she finds weight management boring and hard to maintain over a certain age – gyms and crazy diets are not a bit of her. But keeping her health in check is vital, as she had been suffering with joint pains and was told she might have to undergo a hip operation.'

Fitness guru Chloe has spoken several times about encouraging both her parents to eat more healthily, exercise more and drink less alcohol.

'Chloe has been on both Judy and Richard's cases about staying healthy, eating clean and living long enough to see their five grandchildren grow up. And the weight loss has given Judy the energy boost she needs. Bohdi is go, go, go from morning to night and she can keep up now! Judy is very hands-on and has no intention of sitting back and watching them run about her; she's up walking and running with them,' says the source.

Back in her *This Morning* days

They've always been a close family

'Chloe has been on at Judy'

Judy likes to build exercise into her normal day. 'As Judy isn't a gym bunny – the thought is completely alien to her – she's upped her steps by going on longer walks, does some daily stretching, and even meditates over a cuppa to lower her stress levels. She's also cutting down on alcohol. She looks and feels a good 10 years younger.'

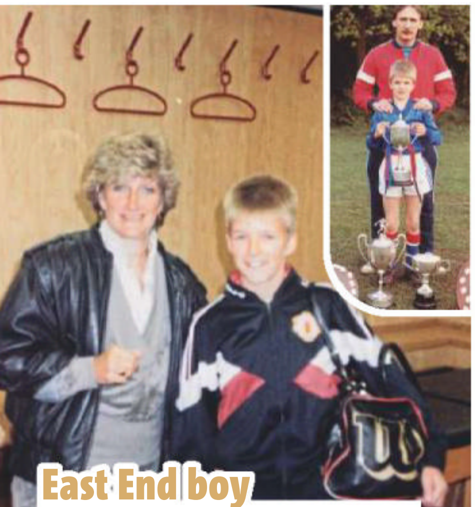
Judy has been 'too stubborn in the past' to listen to her daughter, our source tells us. The former *This Morning* host lost five stone back in 2018, with daughter Chloe saying at the time, 'I actually haven't had anything to do with it. I was as surprised as anyone else when I opened the fridge and saw superfood salads and soups.

'Her palette is changing as she's getting older. I think she was always a meat and potatoes kind of girl, but she has got into sushi, raw fish and whole grain salad. She has dropped the pounds naturally.'

Both Richard, 69, and Judy have enjoyed a glass of wine or two together over their 39-year marriage but have stopped drinking for long periods for health reasons. Whether or not they are abstaining completely or moderating, their vitality is shining through in these pictures and we love to see it!

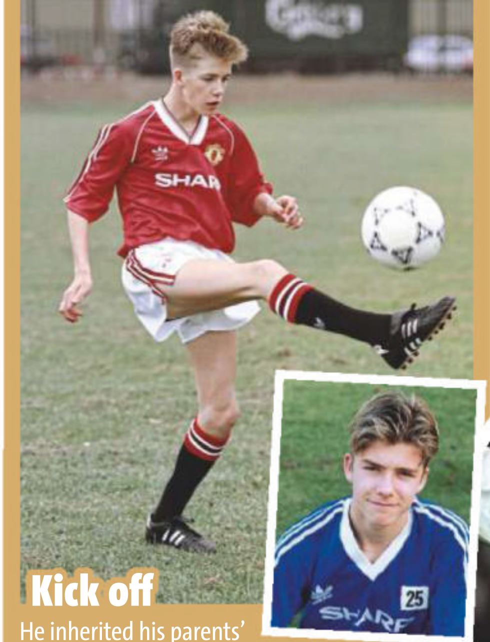
By Julia Davis, **Pictures** Getty, ISOIMAGES LTD, Shutterstock

HAPPY DAVID!



East End boy

David Beckham was born in Leytonstone on 2 May 1975, to parents Sandra and Ted, who were both fanatic Manchester United supporters and would regularly drive 200 miles for home matches. He grew up with older sister Lynne and younger sister Joanne.

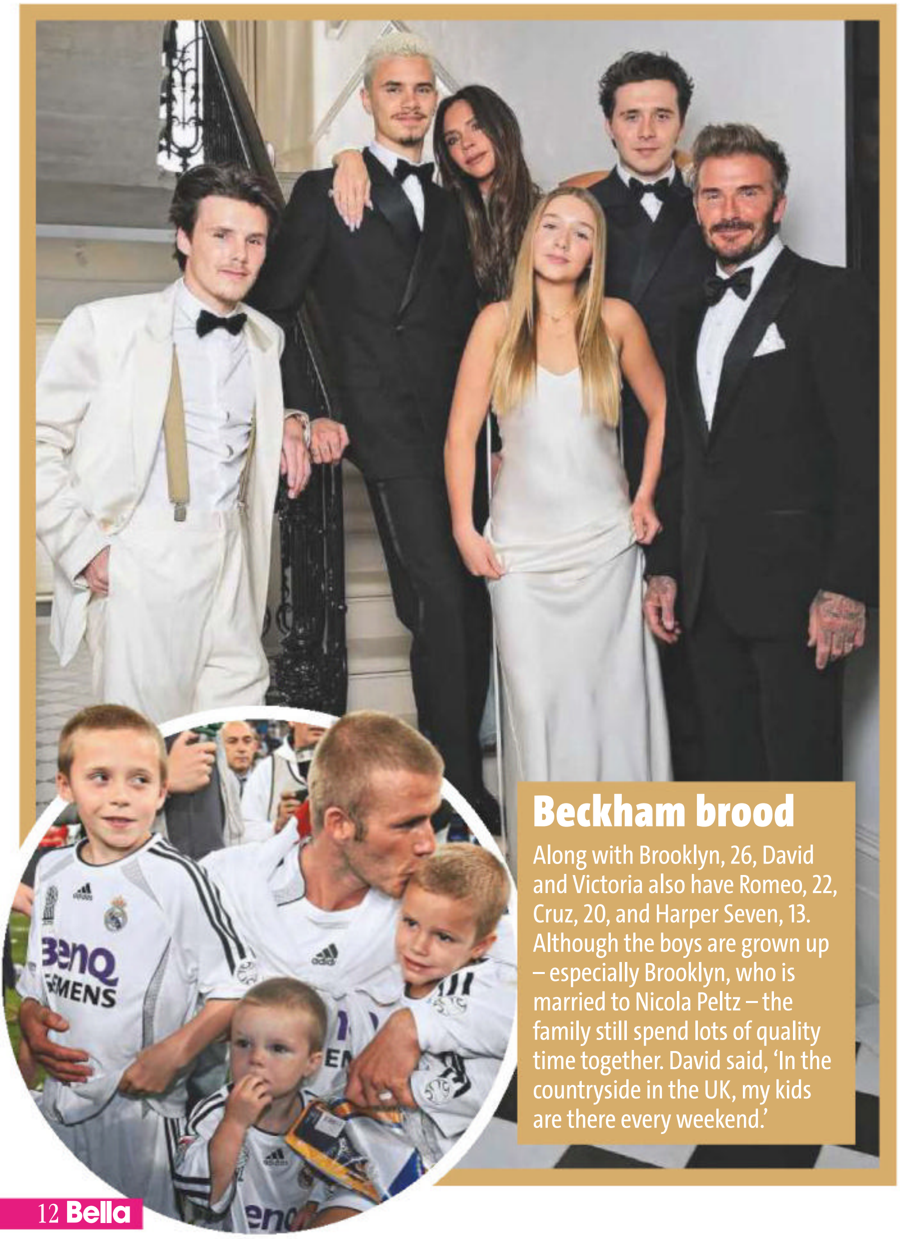


Kick off

He inherited his parents' love for Man Utd, and signed with the team as a trainee at 16. He was part of a group of new young players including Gary Neville and Ryan Giggs. David made his Premier League debut in 1995 at the age of 19. 'It was always my dream, so that first game at Old Trafford was so special for me,' he said.

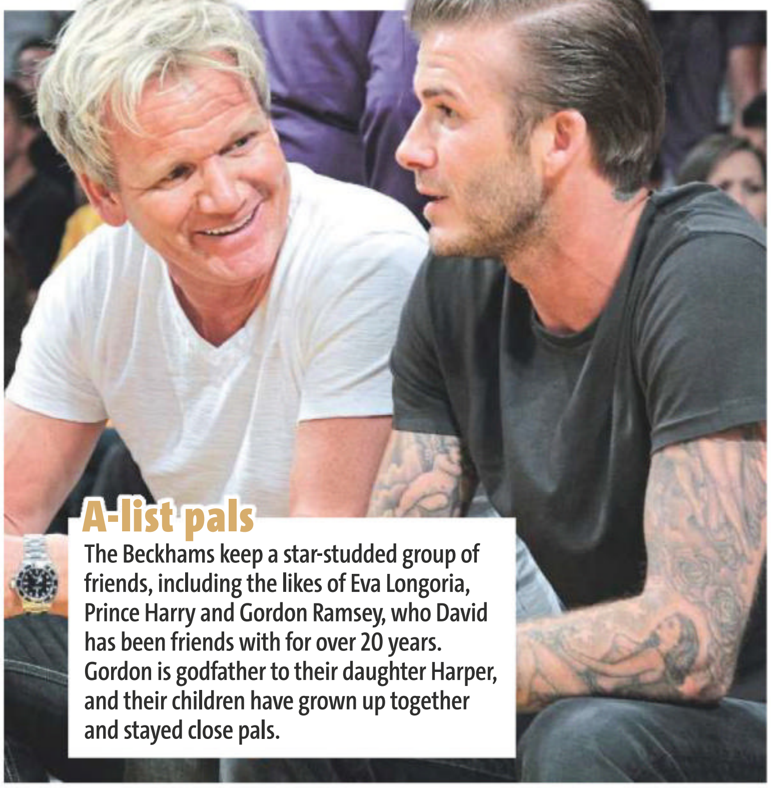
Goldenballs

David achieved many football accolades, including winning six Premier League titles, two FA Cups (and as captain for two of those) and playing for England in three FIFA World Cups. He also played for Real Madrid and LA Galaxy.



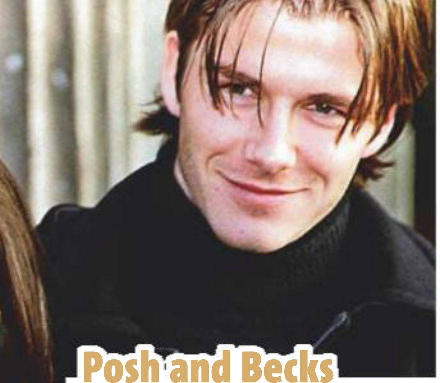
Beckham brood

Along with Brooklyn, 26, David and Victoria also have Romeo, 22, Cruz, 20, and Harper Seven, 13. Although the boys are grown up – especially Brooklyn, who is married to Nicola Peltz – the family still spend lots of quality time together. David said, 'In the countryside in the UK, my kids are there every weekend.'



A-list pals

The Beckhams keep a star-studded group of friends, including the likes of Eva Longoria, Prince Harry and Gordon Ramsey, who David has been friends with for over 20 years. Gordon is godfather to their daughter Harper, and their children have grown up together and stayed close pals.

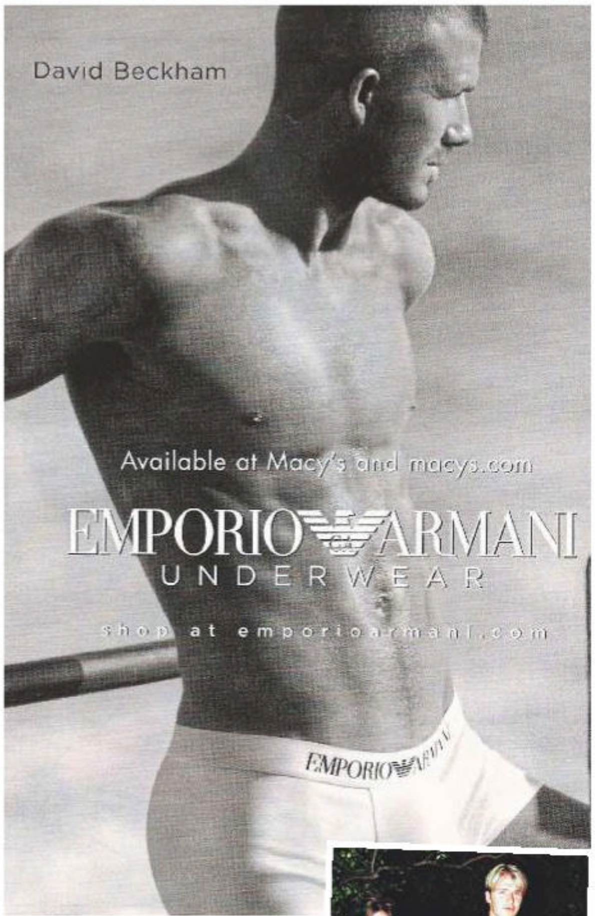


Posh and Becks

It was love at first sight with Victoria Adams, aka Posh Spice, after she attended a Man Utd match in 1997. 'She had a few to drink, and she gave me her number,' he joked. The pair became power couple 'Posh and Becks'. David proposed to Victoria, 50, in 1998, and they had their first child, Brooklyn, the following year.

Wedding bells

The pair had an extravagant wedding in Ireland on 4 July, 1999, where their four-month-old son Brooklyn was the ring-bearer, and David's teammate, Gary Neville, was the best man. They famously wore matching purple outfits by Antonio Berardi, which they re-wore for their 25th wedding anniversary last year.



50th

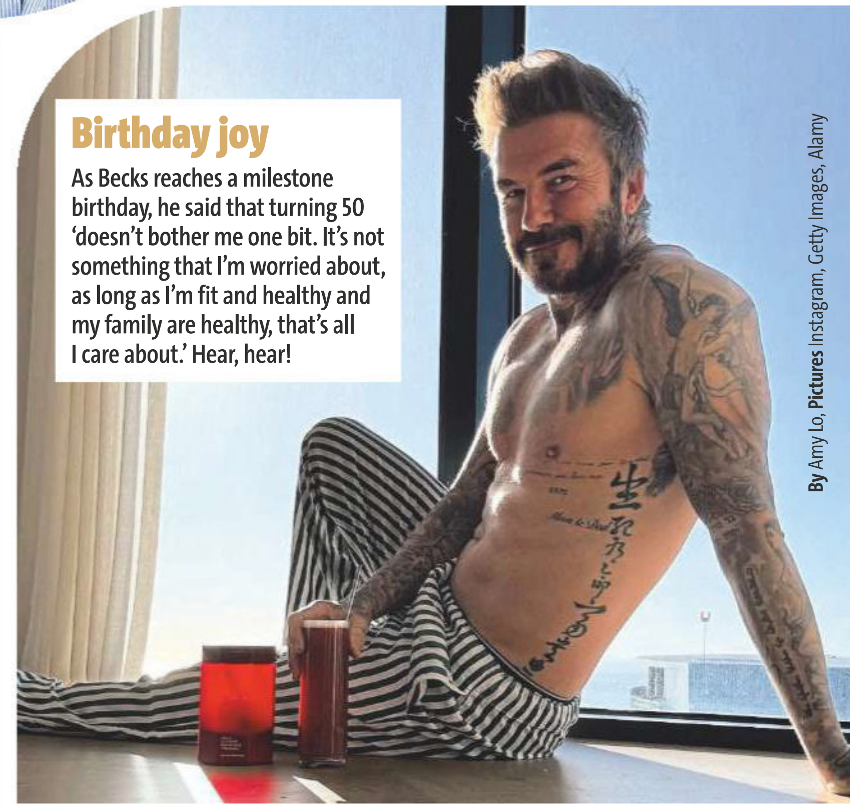
We look back at the legendary footballer's life as he hits the milestone age

Fashion icon

As well as being a sporting hero, David is also a fashion icon, having modelled (mostly in his pants!) for the likes of Emporio Armani and Hugo Boss. He took fashion risks in the '90s, wearing a sarong and stepping out in matching leather Versace outfits with Victoria.

Country living

After years of travelling the world for football, David now lives a calmer pace of life out in the countryside in their huge Cotswold mansion. The family showed off glimpses of their home in the Netflix *Beckham* documentary, and David often shares clips of him gardening, harvesting vegetables and beekeeping on his social media.



Birthday joy

As Becks reaches a milestone birthday, he said that turning 50 'doesn't bother me one bit. It's not something that I'm worried about, as long as I'm fit and healthy and my family are healthy, that's all I care about.' Hear, hear!

By Amy Lo, **Pictures** Instagram, Getty Images, Alamy

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SCAN TO PLAY!

A study has revealed that 74% of parents have a favourite child resulting in them being spoilt more.

So we ask…

Should siblings always be treated the same?

No

'As long as you love your children equally'

Catherine Lofthouse, 44, writer

Siblings shouldn't always be treated the same as they are different people with a different set of needs.

For example, I'm paying for my eldest son, who is 12, to go on a school ski trip, but I have no idea if I'll do the same for my other sons, aged 10 and five. They might not be interested or I might not be able to afford it by the time it comes around. Should I only let my eldest go if the others are definitely going to get the same opportunity?

My job as a parent is to help my children seize opportunities as they arise, but it has to be the right opportunity for the right person at the right time. You can only judge that on a case-by-case basis.

I think you have to meet people where you find them so you might need to give one child a lot more support than their siblings. As long as you love all your children equally, you can show that in a way that is meaningful to that individual without getting too hung up on everything being equal.

As unique as my relationship is with each of my sons, I also love seeing the special bond between my three boys. Just as I don't have a favourite child, I like to think they don't have a favourite brother. I've seen families where it feels like the siblings are in competition for their parents' attention constantly and that makes me a bit sad. Every child deserves to feel special.

Yes

'I'm setting myself up for failure if I don't'

Jo Dunbar, 42, journalist

I grew up with a younger brother and nothing inspires equality more than two kids constantly keeping score on what the other has, whether that's a later bedtime, a bag of sweets or a pair of new trainers.

Now I'm the parent and I can see why my mum and dad kept things equal. With sons two years apart in age, I'm setting myself up for failure if I don't do things the same for both. When Will, 11, and James, nine, were younger, they had the same clothes but in different shades and if one hopped on his scooter, the other did the same.

I don't have to be quite this stringent now they are getting older, but the boys still don't miss a thing: if one gets something new, anything from a comic to football boots, the other will be very keen to find out when his turn is.

Of course, the reality is not everything can be 50/50 all the time. I try to keep the fundamental things equal: trips, one-on-one time, amounts spent on birthday presents and pocket money are good examples of this.

No parents get it right all the time but by aiming to be equal, I am at least trying to be fair.

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By Paula Costas, **Pictures** Getty

'My dying son left me a special gift to help my grief'

Dawn Kennedy, 54, discovered the secret her boy had been keeping which would help her long after he'd gone…

Days before Jay passed

Dishing up dinner, I called out into the garden, 'Boys, come in, dinner's ready.' My sons, Jay and Blair, were playing football, but Jay had just scored a goal and through his cheers they couldn't hear me. Jay was excellent at sports. In fact, anything he put his mind to, he excelled at. He'd always been so kind and well-mannered too. I felt so lucky to have the life I did with my husband, Bryan, and our boys on our farm in Ayrshire.

When Jay was 18, he started at Strathclyde University in Glasgow, studying finance and economics. But five months later, in January 2020, he suffered a seizure. Bryan, Blair and I raced to be with him at the hospital. His tests and a CT scan were clear, and the doctors thought he'd had an epileptic seizure. Soon after, the pandemic struck and Jay moved back home. He started suffering painful headaches and after finding him crawling on the floor in agony, I took him straight to A&E. The test results were like a bomb going off in our lives. They revealed that Jay had a mass on his brain.

Blair, Jay, Dawn and Bryan

He was taken to Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Glasgow where he had emergency surgery to remove 94% of the mass which was taken for a biopsy. A week later, we met with the neurosurgeon. Wanting him to have his independence, I asked Jay if he wanted to go in first and he did. Eventually, the neurosurgeon called me and Bryan in. 'You have one outstanding young man there,' he said. 'He wants to tell you himself.' Shaking, we went inside. 'I'm sorry, guys, it's not good news,' said Jay. He had a high-grade astrocytoma – a type of brain tumour. It was grade three and incurable. 'Treatment would prolong his life,' the doctor said. 'But ultimately, there is no cure.' I felt like I'd been hit by a tidal wave of pain, but I somehow managed to not break down. A part of me must have become detached because my senses couldn't possibly cope with processing the news that my son was dying. Back home, I didn't want to get out of the car. 'I hate that we're bringing this horrid thing into our precious, loving home,' I cried to Bryan. Telling Blair, then 22, broke our hearts. He was devastated.

> 'It's not good news'

Jay endured chemotherapy, radiotherapy and further surgery, to buy more time. He was incredible throughout, but despite

Jay was so brave

With mum, Dawn

our best efforts, the cancer kept returning. His balance and vision started to go but he found small pockets of joy playing online poker. For Jay, it wasn't about the money, it was about the skill. He knew he wasn't going back to university and poker challenged his mind. He even entered an online tournament and won. No one had any idea he was sick.

In August 2021, just over a year on from his diagnosis, Jay became very frail, so Bryan and I met with his consultant, who gave us the news we'd been dreading. 'The chemotherapy is no longer working, and we can't operate,' he said. 'I'm afraid we've run out of options. We're looking at weeks.' Back home, I headed to Jay's room. 'How was it?' he asked. Taking off my shoes I got into his bed. 'We're out of options,' I said, my voice breaking. Jay had been so stoic and often hid his emotions to protect us, and I never let him see me cry throughout this whole nightmare either, but in that moment, we just let it all out and held each other and sobbed.

'I'm so proud of you'

From there, Jay deteriorated rapidly and was in and out of consciousness. But one day, he began repeating a series of numbers. 'What's that, love?' I asked and he continued to mumble them. 'I'll write them down,' I said. A couple of days later, I noticed his phone on the bedside table and realised that the numbers he'd been trying to tell me must be his passcode. I would never usually go through his phone, but he'd given me permission, so I typed in the numbers. The phone unlocked, and on the home screen was a Word document. Opening it, my heart pounded. *I'm not sure if anyone will ever read this but my name is Jay Kennedy and I have brain cancer*, I read as my eyes filled with tears. *The main thing I want to stress to my family, which I hope to convey to them when I find the courage, is that I'm not scared of dying. The reason I am not scared of dying is that, if I had the choice of my life from 0 to 20 and an ordinary life to 80, I'd choose mine every time. I can't think of a single thing I'd change from my childhood because it was honestly perfect… As long as I stress that I wouldn't swap my life for anyone's I'll have done what I set out to with this journal regardless of who reads it*. I couldn't believe it. Jay was trying to help us with our grief when he was gone. 'I've found your journal,' I sobbed. Despite Jay being unconscious, I hoped he could hear me. 'I'm so proud of you,' I whispered.

Five days later, on the 8 October 2021, I lay beside Jay, as his breathing slowed. I knew, despite him trying to hold on for us, it was time. I held his hand and stroked his face, taking in every detail. 'It's OK, son, you can go,' I said. 'I love you and I'll miss you forever and ever. I'll be expecting to hear from you.' With that, my beautiful, brave boy took his last breath. I held on to him, not wanting to ever let go. In just 20 years of life, Jay accomplished so much, and he was so wise beyond his years.

Now it's been just over three years since Jay died and my family and I have raised more than £100k for several charities including Brain Tumour Research, in his honour. To begin with, we did a 44-mile hike in one day which we named The Jay Walk and the money raised went to Ayrshire Cancer Support. Blair and I did a skydive, and I have walked up Snowdon.

I miss Jay more than anything, but reading his journal has kept me going. Whenever I need to feel close to him, I open it up and I can hear my wonderful son's voice as I read a message he wrote to me. It said, *One last thought is I can imagine Mum reading this when she's Granny's age and smiling so I'll say I love you Mum, night night xx.* It breaks my heart but makes me smile too. We'll never forget our wonderful boy.

● *To support The Jay Walk tribute, visit jaykennedy.muchloved.com/fundraising*

By Paula Costas and Ellie Fawcett

'Listening to a podcast helped me lose 5st!'

Diane Ennis, 62, was fed up with falling off the diet wagon – then came a simple solution…

Checking my perm in the mirror, I went off to work at the salon. It was the '80s and at 16, I was an apprentice hairdresser. I'd always been into fashion and hair, I liked to look my best. But I just wished I was slimmer. Every day I'd plan my whole day around whatever diet I was on but they never worked.

In 1994, I met Jeff in a club and after dating for a few months, we were soon in love. The years rolled by, marked out in diets. 'Let's go on holiday,' Jeff would say. I'd nod and say, 'I need to fit in a bikini,' before hopping back on the diet wagon. When a trip, wedding or Christmas drew near, it was always the same. I was good at losing weight for a special occasion – then I'd just put it all back on. I'd strut my stuff in a fabulous size 12 outfit, then I'd fall off the diet wagon for the umpteenth time. Then I'd creep back up to a size 16 yet again. 'You're gorgeous, you don't need to lose weight,' Jeff said kindly. But I didn't believe him.

In 2022, I trained as a driving instructor and we moved to Blackpool. Sitting in a car for eight hours a day wasn't great for losing weight and after work I ate microwave meals, usually with a ton of garlic bread. Then one day I was carrying the washing upstairs and had to stop because I was gasping for breath. 'I need to lose weight!' I wailed yet again. I tried slimming clubs and even a food coach but I just couldn't stay on that diet wagon. 'It's the menopause,' I told myself this time. 'It's impossible.'

That Christmas I stood washing up at the sink, feeling really uncomfortable because my khaki jeggings were tight. I felt so rubbish and low. A few weeks later, I was catching up with friends at our local coffee shop and they weren't feeling much better. 'I've got high blood pressure,' one pal said. 'I've got diabetes,' sighed the other. And suddenly I didn't just feel uncomfortable – I felt scared. *I'm heading the same way*, I thought. I was 5ft 3in and weighed 13st 12lb, wearing clothes in a size 18.

Then in October 2023, I was on the sofa watching YouTube when an advert came on. It was for something called Slimpod, promising to help people lose weight without going on a diet. Then a few nights later, the ad popped up again on my laptop so I looked into it a bit more. It was a paid-for podcast which you

Before

BEFORE
13st 12lb
Size 18

She'd snack when she wasn't hungry

Diana enjoys wearing fashionable clothes

AFTER
9st
Size 10

Diane now

listened to once a day and then, somehow, stopped eating too much. I read that it was a unique approach that taps into the power of your subconscious mind to make lasting, effortless changes. I wasn't convinced it would work – after all, nothing else had. But I decided to register and just see what it was about.

I signed up for the 12-week course, and there were short videos on things like stress-eating, which I definitely did. And there were two podcasts, lasting 10 minutes each – one for weight loss, one for relaxing. That night, I slipped on my headband with earphones and smiled at Jeff. 'I'm going to listen to some relaxing music to help me sleep,' I said to him, wanting to see what it was all about before telling him. 'Night night,' he said, turning over. Then I pressed 'Play' and listened to the weight-loss track.

Tranquil music hummed in my ear and then a velvety male voice said, 'Relax…' The voice went on to encourage me to imagine myself slim and enjoy food rather than see it as the enemy. 'Sink deeper and listen to the most positive, powerful voice inside you,' the voice continued. 'Then you can achieve your dreams.' He finished by saying the more confident I'd become, the more control I'd have. 'You're changing from the inside out.' he added. I listened to both tracks and after just a couple of days, I got a bit of a shock. I realised I wasn't reaching for the biscuits after dinner. Usually, I'd be munching on bourbons or custard creams before bed, even though I was full. Then came another surprise. I fancied a bit of fresh food rather than a ready meal. So I popped chicken breasts and green peppers to roast in the oven. When I put a plate in front of Jeff, he looked puzzled. 'But you don't like green peppers,' he frowned. 'I do now,' I said, and told him my bedtime Slimpod secret.

DIET BEFORE

BREAKFAST: Porridge with sugar, custard creams
LUNCH: French stick with cheese, tomato and mayo, crisps
DINNER: Pie and mash, green beans and gravy
SNACKS: Biscuits, crisps, cake

DIET AFTER

BREAKFAST: Small plain yogurt with berries
LUNCH: Chicken salad
DINNER: Homemade chicken fajitas
SNACKS: Pineapple chunks

I listened every night, not daring to believe it was working. I thought my urge to eat healthily wouldn't last. After all, I was a big fan of Haribo sweets, salt and vinegar crisps, peanuts… Usually, I couldn't stop snacking on all the wrong things. But after 12 weeks I stopped craving salty, fatty and sugary treats. And I felt slimmer and confident about my body. I didn't keep weighing myself, though. I put a ribbon around my waist and drew a line on it every time I lost an inch. I bought myself a silver, sequinned jumpsuit for a New Year's Eve party and bopped away to ABBA's *Dancing Queen* feeling fantastic.

By the time my ribbon showed 10 lost inches, it was March 2024 and I bought a pair of black ankle-grazer trousers with gold flecks for a Rick Astley concert. I could enjoy fashionable clothes without riding the diet wagon. Now I weigh 9 stone and I'm a trim size 10. I lost 5 stone in 15 months – just by listening to a podcast in bed. Slimpod doesn't rely on willpower, instead, it works with your subconscious mind to create new, healthier patterns that feel natural and effortless. By rewiring those deeply ingrained habits, Slimpod allows change to happen gently and sustainably. My brain is now trained to choose snacks like a simple salad or a banana and crackers, and I want to eat them, it's not that I feel I have too. And I now don't overthink or obsess about eating – my body just guides me to stop when I am satisfied. I can now carry four times more washing upstairs and my old leather leggings are too big. I'm happier than ever and I'm never getting on the diet wagon again.

By Matt Barbour and Sharon Wright

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Jacket, 8-32, £78; **Jumpsuit,** 8-32, £65, both JD Williams

Dream team

Jacket, S-XXL, Monsoon, £80

Earrings, Olivia Burton, £55

Stuck for styling ideas? A feminine co-ord is one of the easiest ways to wear the trend and is smart enough for the office too

Trousers, S-XXL, Monsoon, £65

Leather bag, John Lewis, £99

Shoes, Off The Hook, £41

UTILITY CHIC

Elevate your wardrobe with these hardworking staples

Continued over the page...

Easy breezy

Hat, Marks & Spencer, **£17.50**

Necklace, Parfois, **£12.99**

Dress, 8-32, JD Williams, **£40**

LE MARAIS
PARIS

Bag, Next, **£28**

Every wardrobe needs a 'throw-on' dress that works with sandals, trainers and boots, and this one ticks all the boxes

Sandals, Matalan, **£20**

Lush linen

Shirt, XS-XL, Zara, **£29.99**

Bangle, Marks & Spencer, **£16.50**

Bag, Cotton Traders, **£20**

Not only will this soft cotton fabric make your ensemble look expensive, it will keep your body temperature regulated, too.

Trousers, 6-24, Marks & Spencer, **£45**

Shoes, New Look, **£35.99**

Waistcoat,10-32, **£46**; **Trousers,** 10-32, **£40**, both Simply Be; shoes, Stylist's own

Shirt, 6-20, £55; **Shorts,** 6-20 £49; **Bag** £79, all John Lewis

One-step dressing

Sunglasses, H&M, £12.99

Necklace, Zara £17.99

Bag, H&M, £22.99

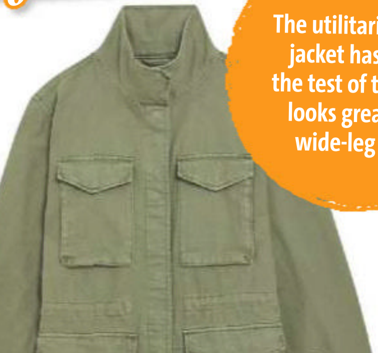
Getting dressed in the morning is simple with a relaxed jumpsuit. A pop of leopard print will add a playful edge to your outfit

Sandals, Long Tall Sally, £30

Jumpsuit, 10-20, M&Co, £39

Must-have jacket

Jeans, 8-24, Freemans £35



The utilitarian-style jacket has stood the test of time and looks great with wide-leg jeans

Jacket, 6-24, Marks & Spencer, £49.50

Bag, Parfois, £35.99

Shoes, JD Williams, £59

T-shirt, 6-26, Next, £19

By Lauren Goodwin-Grafton

SELL YOUR STORY FOR CASH!

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Crack our CODE BREAKER and discover the winning word...

Code BREAKER

Our Lives

I'd spent a childhood believing Mum had abandoned me. Then one day, Dad sat me down and I learnt the shocking truth... By Helen Danso, 44

'Mum, is it really you?'

'I've missed you so much'

DISCOVERED YOUR LONG-LOST FAMILY?

EARN UP TO £1000!

T&Cs APPLY

Helen Danso grew up believing her mum had abandoned her, until her dad revealed he'd kidnapped her from their home in Ghana and brought her to the UK. After his death, Helen finally spoke to her mother, who'd spent years trying to find her. Sadly, her mum died before they could meet, but Helen forged an amazing connection with the family she'd been stolen from.

Helen used The Story People to share her family reunion story, and you can too.

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thestorypeople.co.uk

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Accessorize, £30

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Bershka, £29.99

Butter Yellow

Freshen up your wardrobe with this soft shade

Next, £38

River Island, £38

H&M, £27.99

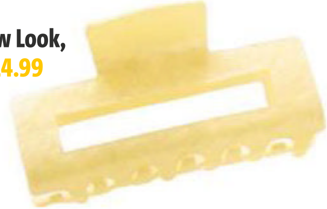
Anyday at John Lewis, £45

boohoo.com, £18

Next, £9

Marks & Spencer, £15

Dune, £99



New Look, £4.99

Gola at Oliver Bonas, £95

By Phoebe Denman

The Skincare

Our jargon-free guide to understanding the top anti-ageing

Retinol

Also known as vitamin A, this anti-ageing hero encourages skin cell turnover as well as preventing collagen loss. The result? Smoother, clearer skin that is less prone to wrinkling.

How to apply: If you're new to retinol, we recommend starting with a low concentrate cream before bed. Use every other night, before increasing to every evening or switching to a more potent serum. Always follow with sunscreen the next morning.

Use with: Retinol can increase skin sensitivity and dryness, so incorporate ceramides and hyaluronic acid to soothe irritation. Avoid AHAs, BHAs or any other exfoliants.

Neutrogena Retinol Boost+ Intense Care Cream, £28

Neutrogena
RETINOL BOOST+
INTENSE CARE CREAM
FRAGRANCE-FREE
50ml

Peptides

Known for their ability to boost collagen production and strengthen the skin's repair system, peptides can help to plump, strengthen and firm complexions. They're made from amino acids, meaning they're suitable for all skin types.

How to apply: This universally safe ingredient can be applied in any form and at any time. For extra-pillowy results, pop on a peptide oil after completing your usual routine.

Use with: Anything! This hard-working option will help boost skin strengthening ceramides and hyaluronic acid, as well as soothing irritation caused by exfoliants.

Nip+Fab Peptide Fix Finishing Oil 2%, £29.95

Vitamin C

This glow-boosting antioxidant helps to brighten skin and reduce hyperpigmentation as well as minimising the damage caused by pollution and UV exposure.

How to apply: Vitamin C can be used overnight, but we find it works best when applied in the morning and is especially great for darker areas, including under eyes. However, it can increase sun sensitivity, so following with an SPF is vital.

Use with: For seriously illuminating results, pair vitamin C with a hyaluronic acid and niacinamide.

RoC Multi Correxion Revive + Glow Eye Balm, £32.99

RoC
MULTI CORREXION
RENOUVEAU + ÉCLAT
BAUME POUR LES YEUX
REVIVE + GLOW EYE BALM

Hyaluronic Acid

Despite its intimidating name, this ultra-gentle humectant is found in our skin and joints. It can hold up to 1000 times its weight in water, making it a hydrating powerhouse – perfect for achieving soft skin.

How to apply: As this is one of the safest ingredients out there, it can be used in any form. For a real moisture-surge, try applying a serum onto clean, damp skin, or treat yourself to an overnight mask two to three times per week.

Use with: This delicate option works with all types of skincare; however, we especially recommend it to anyone suffering from flakiness caused by retinol, glycolic or salicylic acid.

Fresh Elements Hydrate Refreshing Overnight Mask, £9.50

2 FRESH+ ELEMENTS
HYDRATE+
YES YOU DEW!

Glossary

ingredients

Ceramides

Hormonal changes and overusing active ingredients, such as retinol, can lead to a compromised complexion, which is where ceramides come into action. Made from naturally occurring fat molecules, they help to repair and strengthen the skin's barrier as well as reducing inflammation.

How to apply: Due to its restorative nature, ceramides can be used at any time in any form. If you're feeling extra-sensitive, try massaging a high concentrate serum onto your face and neck before applying your moisturiser.

Use with: This barrier-building star works with all other ingredients, but is especially great when layered with retinol and AHAs.

Simple Ceramide Boosters & Omega Complex Serum, £9.99

Simple
10%
ceramide boosters & omega complex
booster serum
30 mL e

pixi
skintreats
Glow Tonic
8.5 fl.oz/250 ml e

Glycolic Acid

This chemical exfoliant works by melting away the top layer of dead skin cells on your face. It offers several benefits, including minimising the appearance of pores, however we find it works best when it comes to tackling hyperpigmentation.

How to apply: Just like physical exfoliants, most glycolic acid treatments should be used two to three times per week – any more could cause more harm than good. For a daily fix, try a low-concentrate toner that can be swiped on with a cotton pad after cleansing.

Use with: To reduce the appearance of dark spots, try using vitamin C and niacinamide the morning after your glycolic acid application. It can also be used in rotation with retinol.

Pixi Glow Tonic, £18

Salicylic Acid

This type of BHA – or oil-soluble acid – is best known for its ability to exfoliate dead skin cells along with its pore-cleansing ability. So, if you have found that the menopause has made your skin oilier, or more blemish-prone than usual, then you'll want to introduce it to your routine.

How to apply: Like most exfoliants, it is best to use salicylic acid in the evening, for example in a cleanser, to prevent further damage.

Use with: BHAs can increase skin sensitivity so follow with a ceramide product.

Paula's Choice Pore Normalizing Cleanser, £22

CLEAR
PAULA'S CHOICE
Pore Normalizing Cleanser
Blemish-Prone Skin

L'ORÉAL PARIS
BRIGHT REVEAL
Dark Spot UV Fluid
SPF 50+
VERY HIGH PROTECTION

Niacinamide

Niacinamide – also known as vitamin B3 – is an anti-inflammatory option, which can brighten and smooth uneven complexions. It is also known to reduce excess oil production and balancing uneven skin tones, too.

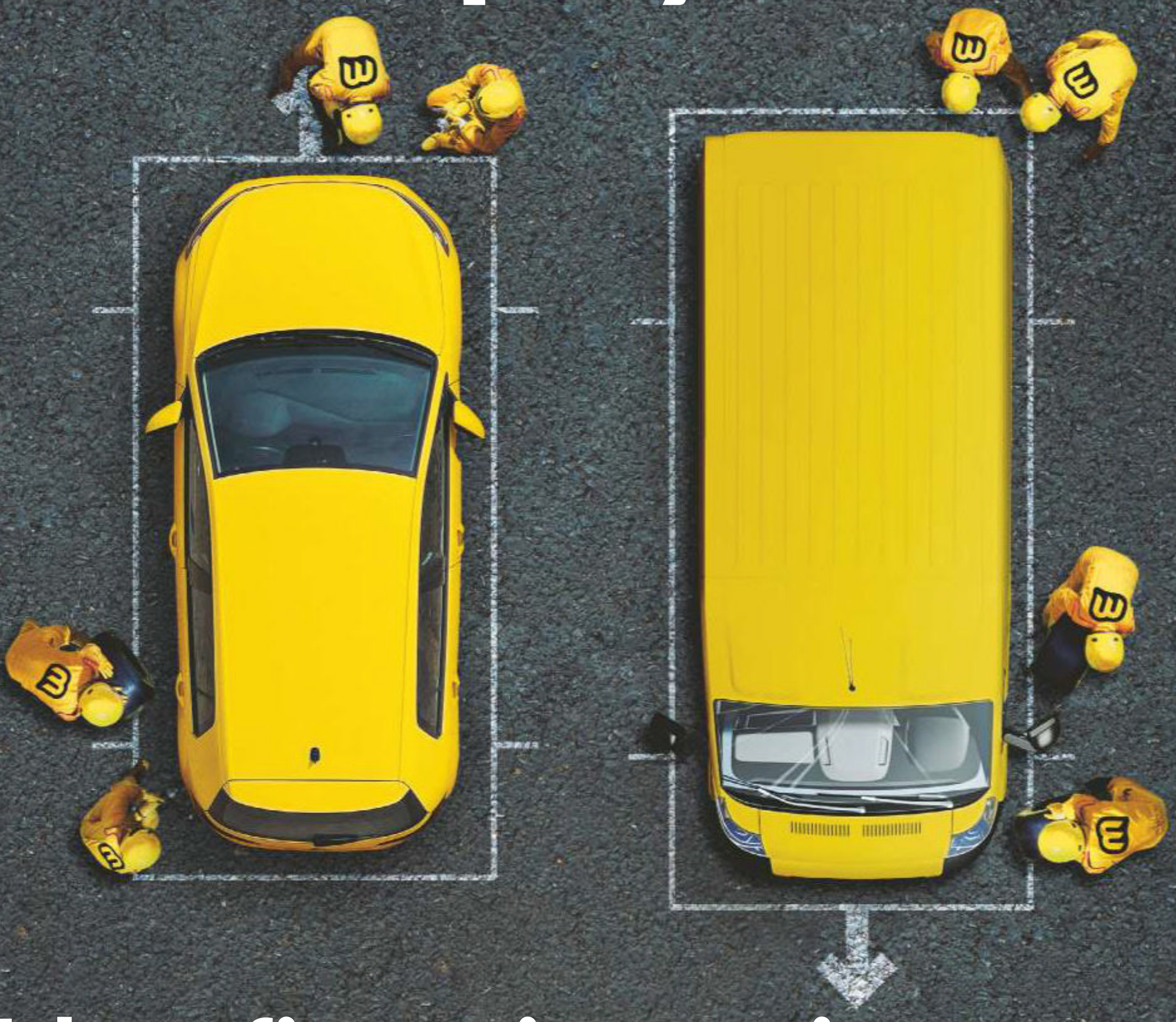
How to apply: Suitable for all skin types, it is best used in a leave-on product such as a cream, serum or even a SPF. This way it can work its magic without being washed off!

Use with: Niacinamide is incredibly versatile and can be paired with most products. During the day, team it up with vitamin C and hyaluronic acid for a fresh-faced finish.

L'Oréal L'Oréal Paris Bright Reveal Dark Spot UV Fluid SPF 50+ Niacinamide, £19.99

By Cigdem Tanrioglu, **Picture** Shutterstock

Car or van,
work or play



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Double Take

There's no need to splash the cash on luxury make-up thanks to these bargain buys

Prep and Prime

This holy grail primer grips make-up in place without feeling heavy. It's comparable to another viral product for its dewy results, texture and staying power, but at a snip of the price.
e.l.f. Power Grip Primer, £10

Treat Lips

This long-lasting lippie does not budge, meaning it looks pristine much longer than any other affordable lip product. Plus, the shade 'Brunch Me' is very close in colour to a popular lipstick from a luxe brand.
NYX Professional Makeup Suede Matte Lipstick in Brunch Me, £8

Control Shine

Morphe's setting powder is one of the best matches we've found for a certain product favoured by make-up artists. Although it's mattifying, it feels silky and comfortable on skin.
Morphe Bake and Set Powder, £14

Enhance Eyes

Save on an infamous high-powered eyeshadow primer with Milani's almost-as-good addition. The lightweight finish leaves both powder and cream eyeshadows looking great, without any creasing.
Milani Eyeshadow Primer, £10

Blend Your Base

This soft sponge not only blends powders, creams and liquids, it also boasts foam technology to prevent everyday build-up. Just like its high-end alternative, it'll help you achieve a flawless base.
Real Techniques Miracle Complexion Sponge, £6.99

Add Colour

This buildable lip and cheek tint nails it, and is the closest you'll get to a similar bestseller thanks to its sheer, glowy finish and rose-toned hue.
W7 Love Pop Lip & Cheek Tint, £6

Get Glowing

These hydrating bronzing drops are close in colour and texture to a pricier pick and work just as well at giving skin a natural sun-kissed tint. It's pretty hard to tell the difference!
Studio London U Dew U Bronzing Drops, £5

Soothe and Cover

Why splurge on an expensive foundation when you can get similar results for a fraction of the price? While the original is enriched with oat to soothe skin, Primark uses wild pansy to achieve the same effect.
Primark PS... My Perfect Colour Illuminating Foundation, £6

By Phoebe Denman

THE MARVELLOUS MENOPAUSE PLAN

How to lose weight, sleep better and have more energy

We've collaborated with Issviva, an online menopause hub, which specialises in advice and products, to give you a menopausal balancing plan that really works!

Four of their top ambassadors reveal the things you can easily do to help shift stubborn weight, increase your metabolism, and look and feel more revitalised fast. By following this plan you could lose a healthy one to two pounds a week, and get great health benefits.

Eat yourself slim and healthy

Nutritionist Colleen Fogarty Draper says, 'The foods you eat can have a powerful impact on how you feel, particularly helping with hormonal balance, energy levels, prevent cravings and increase sleep quality.' Here are her top recommendations.

- Research shows a Mediterranean-style diet can reduce menopause symptoms, support your hormones and maintain a healthy weight. This includes fibre-rich plant foods (more fibre can help nourish your gut bacteria, to aid with oestrogen balance), protein-rich foods like eggs, fish and vegetables, and healthy fats, such as avocados and olive oil.
- Declining oestrogen levels can affect your glucose metabolism, leading to energy dips and cravings. Balancing your blood sugar is key. To do this, pair proteins like eggs, poultry, fish and beans, with fibre-rich plant foods like quinoa, sweet potatoes and leafy greens, to keep your energy levels steady. Eating enough protein can also help stabilise your hunger hormones – aim for one gram of protein per kilogram of body weight. For example, if you weigh 60kg, aim for 20g protein per meal. B vitamins from leafy greens and whole grains help convert food into fuel, while iron from lean meats and legumes ensures oxygen reaches your cells to help keep you energised. Magnesium-rich foods, like nuts and seeds (around a small handful is a serving), and dark chocolate (enjoy one to two squares), can help support muscle function and energy production at a cellular level for energising effects.
- Menopausal cravings can also be caused by nutrient deficiencies. Chromium, found in broccoli and whole grains, helps regulate blood sugar, while omega-3 fatty acids from oily fish (like salmon, mackerel and sardines) and seeds and nuts like chia seeds and walnuts, supports mood and brain health. Aim for around 100g oily fish two to three times a week.
- Many women experience sleep disruptions during the menopause, which can exacerbate tiredness, hunger and cravings. Tryptophan, found in turkey, dairy and pumpkin seeds, helps produce serotonin in the brain, which promotes relaxation. Magnesium-rich foods, as mentioned above, can also help to calm the nervous system. Reducing caffeine in the afternoon and avoiding sugary late-night snacks can be helpful. To show you how easy it is to put all these

meal recommendations together, check out the delicious recipes over the turn page.

Metabolism-boosting exercises

'During menopause, adapting exercise routines is crucial to maintaining flexibility, boosting metabolism and managing hormonal shifts,' explains fitness expert Joey Bull. She says strength training is key for muscle mass and bone density. Focus on squats, lunges, push-ups, triceps presses and pull-ups. Do five to six reps per set, pushing hard but avoiding exhaustion. Aim for two to three sets, three times a week.

Endurance cardio, like jogging, where you push yourself for long periods, is less effective at this stage of your life, as prolonged exertion can be more inflammatory than energising. Instead, opt for HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training) where you do 30 seconds of all-out effort, followed by two minutes of recovery, to deliver optimal fat loss and cardiovascular benefits without excessive stress. Add this to walks/swims/cycles you do three times a week, warming up well and aiming for at least two to four bursts.

Stretching every day supports flexibility and muscle recovery. Hold each stretch for 30 seconds, covering all major muscle groups – arms, legs and abs. Keep it gentle; your muscles should relax not strain.

Your weekly exercise routine

Here's a simple summary to show how you can easily fit Joey Bull's effective exercise recommendations into your life.

Mon/Wed/Fri Strength training – three sets of five reps

Tue/Thu/Sat HIIT cardio – 30-second bursts during a walk, swim or cycle

Daily Static stretching – 30 seconds per stretch, at least five minutes total

Slumber more sweetly

'Poor sleep is one of the most common menopause symptoms and can have a negative impact on your mood and energy levels during the day,' says Dr Aarthi Sinha, GP and menopause expert. She suggests the following tips to help you sleep better. Drink lots of water during the day but ease off a few hours before bedtime. Reduce your alcohol intake, or avoid altogether, and have a cup of chamomile tea before bed. Try a good-quality supplement like magnesium, which can help improve energy levels and aid relaxation to promote sleep.

Continued over the page...

Ashwagandha is also known to encourage better sleep, leaving you more revitalised. We like Issiva's ZZZ supplement, which contains both of these – see our special reader discount. Also introduce moderate aerobic exercise like walking or swimming to help increase your energy levels, improve your mood and your sleep. The NHS recommends 150 minutes a week. Meditation and mindfulness exercises before bed can also have a relaxing effect and help reduce night-time anxiety.

Nutrition-packed recipes to try

Nutritionist Charlotte Hunter shares two days of some of her favourite recipes, with a Med twist, to show you how easy and satisfying a menopausal balancing way of eating can be.

Day 1

Breakfast

Healthy banana bread

Makes 12 slices, 1 slice per serving

Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas 4. Line a loaf tin with baking parchment. Mash 5 medium ripe bananas, then add 125ml water and 1tsp vanilla extract. Place 300g buckwheat flour, 2tsp baking powder, 1tsp bicarbonate of soda, and 1tsp cinnamon, in a separate bowl. Add the banana mixture and mix well. Stir through 50g chopped walnuts and 50g raisins. Chop up one more banana and stir into the mixture. Pour into a loaf tin and cook for 20min, turn the tin around on the shelf then cook for a further 20min. Serve with nut butter, or a dollop of Greek yogurt and a palmful of berries.

Lunch

Turkey burgers

Serves 4

Combine 400g turkey mince, 1 small chopped onion, 2 peeled and crushed garlic cloves, ½tsp salt, pinch of black pepper and ¼tsp paprika, in a large bowl. Using damp hands, divide the mixture into four patties. Heat a splash of olive oil in a frying pan and cook for around 5min on each side, making sure they are not pink in the middle. Serve each in a wholemeal roll with a big mixed salad, salsa and guacamole.

Mid-day snack

Houmous and veg crudités

Dinner

Tomato cottage pie

Serves 4

Boil 800g potatoes (sweet or normal), chopped into 4cm pieces, for 10min until soft then mash, season and add a dash of milk. Place to one side. Heat 2tsp olive oil in a pan. Brown 400g lean beef mince for 5min then remove and place to one side. Into the pan add 1 chopped onion, 1 large chopped carrot, 1 finely chopped celery stick, 1 finely chopped garlic clove, and fry for 4min until soft. Add the mince back in, along with a tin of chopped tomatoes, 2tbsp tomato purée, 1tbsp Worcestershire sauce, and 1tsp vegetable bouillon. Add a little water if needed. Cook for 15min, then season to taste. Place the mince mix into a medium-sized casserole dish, then top with the mash. Bake for 30min at 200°C/gas 6 until the top is golden. Serve with salad or green veggies like broccoli.

Day 2

Breakfast

Energising smoothie

Serves 2

Blend together 2 apricots, stones removed; a banana, peeled; 1 kiwi fruit, peeled; juice of 1 lime; a thumb-sized piece of ginger, grated; 50g kale and a little water. Keep adding water to reach your desired consistency. Add a scoop of your favourite protein or collagen powder if you desire.

Lunch

Butter bean curry with buckwheat naan bread

Serves 4

To make the curry, heat 1tbsp olive oil in a pan and cook 1 chopped onion, for around 5min until softened. Add 1 chopped pepper, 2tbsp curry paste (add more or less depending on your preference), and 2tbsp tomato purée, and cook for a further 5min. Add 1 tin chopped tomatoes and 1 tin drained butter beans and cook for 10min. Add water if needed. Serve with a dollop of Greek yogurt, brown rice, a side salad and buckwheat naan bread. To make the naan bread simply mix together 140g buckwheat flour, 120ml warm water and 2tsp olive oil. Divide the dough in half, roll each half between two sheets of parchment paper into a thin oval. Dry fry on each side for 3-4min. Cut into 4 sections, one each.

Mid-afternoon snack

A few cubes of feta cheese and a palmful of olives

Dinner

Chicken satay salad

Serves 2

Combine 1tsp mild curry powder, ½tsp ground cumin, 1 grated garlic clove, and 1tsp honey, together. Mix well. Slice 2 chicken breasts into 4 strips and put onto skewers. Thoroughly coat in the marinade and place in the fridge for at least an hour. Make a satay dressing by mixing 1tsp crunchy peanut butter, 1tbsp sweet chilli sauce, juice of half a lime, and 2tbsp of water, in a bowl until you have a smooth sauce. Cook the chicken under a medium grill for 5min on each side, or until cooked. Arrange the leaves of a romaine lettuce with a quarter of a sliced cucumber, 2 sliced spring onions, handful of fresh coriander, and seeds from half a pomegranate. Add the skewers to the salad and drizzle on the satay dressing.

issviva
ZZZZs
issviva
Mood & Energy

25% OFF MENOPAUSE SUPPLEMENTS

Go to issviva.co.uk to find accurate information and science-based solutions to support your menopause journey. Free to join, you will find expert advice, education, clinically proven products, supplements and a safe community space where you can share information with other like-minded women. Issviva supplements can help support common menopause symptoms like sleep, mood, energy and focus. *Bella* readers can get an exclusive 25% discount on these supplements by using the code Bella25 upon checkout. Discount offer runs until 29 May 2025.

By Julia Smurthwaite, **Pictures** Getty

NB. If you are pregnant, breastfeeding, under 18 or have a medical condition please seek professional advice before changing your diet.

This week we're...

Keep up-to-date with the latest trends in the foodie world

BAKING...

JUST ADD M*LK!
JUST ADD BUTTER!
RAINBOW COOKIE MIX
based FOOD

Not just any cake mix, these elevated mixes from Based are free from the top 14 allergens, including nuts, gluten, soy and eggs, requiring just the addition of your preferred milk or butter. We're loving the vibrant Rainbow Cookie Mix (**£4.89**) and Decadent Brownie mix (**£4.89**) with its rich fudgy texture – perfect for any bank holiday baking. From basedfood.co.uk.

KITTING OUT THE KITCHEN...

Bring spring to your cuppa with the delicate Daisy collection from Price & Kensington. The generously sized six-cup teapot and pretty mugs are perfect for entertaining – afternoon tea in the garden anyone? Or take it to the next level with the dinnerware set with tea, coffee and sugar canisters. From Amazon, Very and Freemans. From RRP **£5.50** for a dinnerware piece (each sold individually).

BOOSTING OUR GUT HEALTH...

Garden of Life
Microbiome
Once Daily Women's
30 BILLION GUARANTEED
15 LIVE BACTERIA STRAINS
FOOD SUPPLEMENT
VEGAN

As part of a healthy lifestyle and balanced diet, supplements can help fine-tune good gut health. Microbiome Once Daily Women's Formula from the Garden of Life contains a mix of carefully selected live bacteria with no carriers, fillers, artificial colours, flavours, sweeteners or preservatives. Zoe Cooper, innovation manager, says, 'We're fanatical about food. When we create microbiome formulas we begin with real foods. The power of our products comes from natural, high-quality ingredients.' From gardenoflife.co.uk and selected health food stores. RRP **£41.99**/ 30 capsules.

SPARKLING...

Bring a little fizz to your everyday with the The Bubbla from CO2 YOU. Enjoy sparkling water while cutting down on single-use plastic. Available in a stylish matt black, once your Bubbla is set up, simply pull the lever and release the fizz. And why not add some flavour to your bubbles with your favourite juice or syrup. From co2you.com. **£120** or **£60** when purchased with one of CO2 YOU's gas refill subscriptions.

DRINKING...

Following the huge success of Grind's ready-to-drink Iced Oat Latte, we're loving the newly available Matcha tea starter kit, including a bamboo whisk, whisk holder, serving spoon and matcha bowl (**£40**). Grind's Ceremonial-Grade Matcha (**£20**/30 servings) is full of antioxidants: mix with a little water to make a paste, then enjoy experimenting and using in lattes, shakes, smoothies and teas. From grind.co.uk.

READING...

Xanthe Ross
Stay for Supper
laid-back vegetarian food to share

With dinner parties and hosting on the rise, *Stay for Supper* by Xanthe Ross (**£25**, Quadrille) is a wonderfully laid-back approach to vegetarian cooking. With great sharing dishes, from simple suppers using seasonal ingredients to dreamy desserts, such as no-churn raspberry ice-cream and a meringue tower, the difficulty is choosing where to start! Recipes can be scaled up or down and paired with other recipes depending on how many you are feeding.

By Angela Romeo **Pictures** Book cover © Ola O. Smit

Gluten-free & fabulous!

Revamp your weekly menu with these tasty, affordable dishes

Smash burger mac 'n' cheese

Serves 3 *Takes* 30min

- 300g gluten-free dried macaroni or penne
- Vegetable oil spray
- 500g minced beef, ideally 20% fat
- ½tbsp smoked paprika
- ½tbsp onion powder or asafoetida
- ½tsp salt
- 1tsp ground black pepper
- 3 small gherkins, finely diced
- 1½tbsp cornflour
- 2tbsp Dijon mustard
- 300ml milk
- 150g mature Cheddar, grated
- 1tbsp tomato purée
- Small handful of chives, finely chopped (optional)

TO SERVE

- ½ iceberg lettuce, shredded
- 6-8tbsp tomato or chilli relish

1 *Cook the macaroni (or penne) in a pan of boiling, salted water according to the packet instructions, then drain.*

2 *Meanwhile, spray the base of a large pot that has a lid with oil and place over a medium heat. Once hot, add the beef – it should make a nice sizzling sound. Flatten with the back of a wooden spoon or spatula until it's all flat and even, like one huge burger. Fry until browned on the underside, then break up and flip to the uncooked side. Once both sides are browned, add the smoked paprika, onion powder or asafoetida, salt and pepper, then fry until fragrant.*

3 *Add the gherkins, cornflour or potato starch and mustard, then stir in and fry for a further 2-3min. Add the milk and allow to simmer for 3-4min until thickened a little, then stir in the grated cheese and tomato purée.*

4 *Add the drained macaroni and stir in until well coated. Scatter with the chives, if using, and serve alongside shredded lettuce and dollops of relish.*

Tip

For a vegan version, use dairy free milk and cheese, and swap the mince for a gluten free veggie alternative.

Microwave sweet & sour chicken

Serves 2 Takes 14-15min (+ 30-35min for the optional rice)

- **200g frozen sliced red, green and yellow peppers**
- **2 skinless, boneless chicken breasts, thinly sliced**
- **4 canned pineapple rings**
- **Handful of spring onions, thinly sliced on the diagonal**

FOR THE RICE (optional)

- **1 mug of long-grain rice**
- **2 mugs of boiling water**

FOR THE SAUCE

- **110ml pineapple or orange juice**
- **4tbsp rice wine vinegar**
- **4tbsp honey**
- **1tbsp gluten-free soy sauce**
- **2tbsp cornflour**
- **½tsp garlic paste (optional)**
- **½tsp ginger paste**
- **¼tsp Chinese five spice**

1 *If you're making the rice, do this first. Add the rice and boiling water to a microwave-proof glass dish that has a lid, place the lid on and microwave on low–medium power (180W – definitely NOT full power!) for 30-35min. Don't open the lid at any point. Once cooked, set aside and keep warm.*
2 *Place the sauce ingredients in a medium microwavable plastic bowl and stir to combine. Add the peppers, chicken and pineapple rings and push them below the surface of the sauce.*
3 *Loosely cover with a plate and microwave on full power (1000W or as close as yours will go) for 10min, stirring halfway. Then remove the plate and microwave for 2-3min or until the sauce is nicely thickened. If the sauce is thickened, then the chicken is definitely cooked! Scatter the spring onion greens on top, and serve with rice, if liked.*

Tip

For microwave rice, take any measurement of rice, then double it: that's how much boiling water you'd add – 200g of rice would require 400ml of boiling water.

Tip

For a dairy free version use a (hard) dairy free alternative to butter and dairy free milk.

BUDGET
GLUTEN FREE
BECKY EXCELL

These recipes are taken from ***Budget Gluten Free by Becky Excell*** (Quadrille, £20)

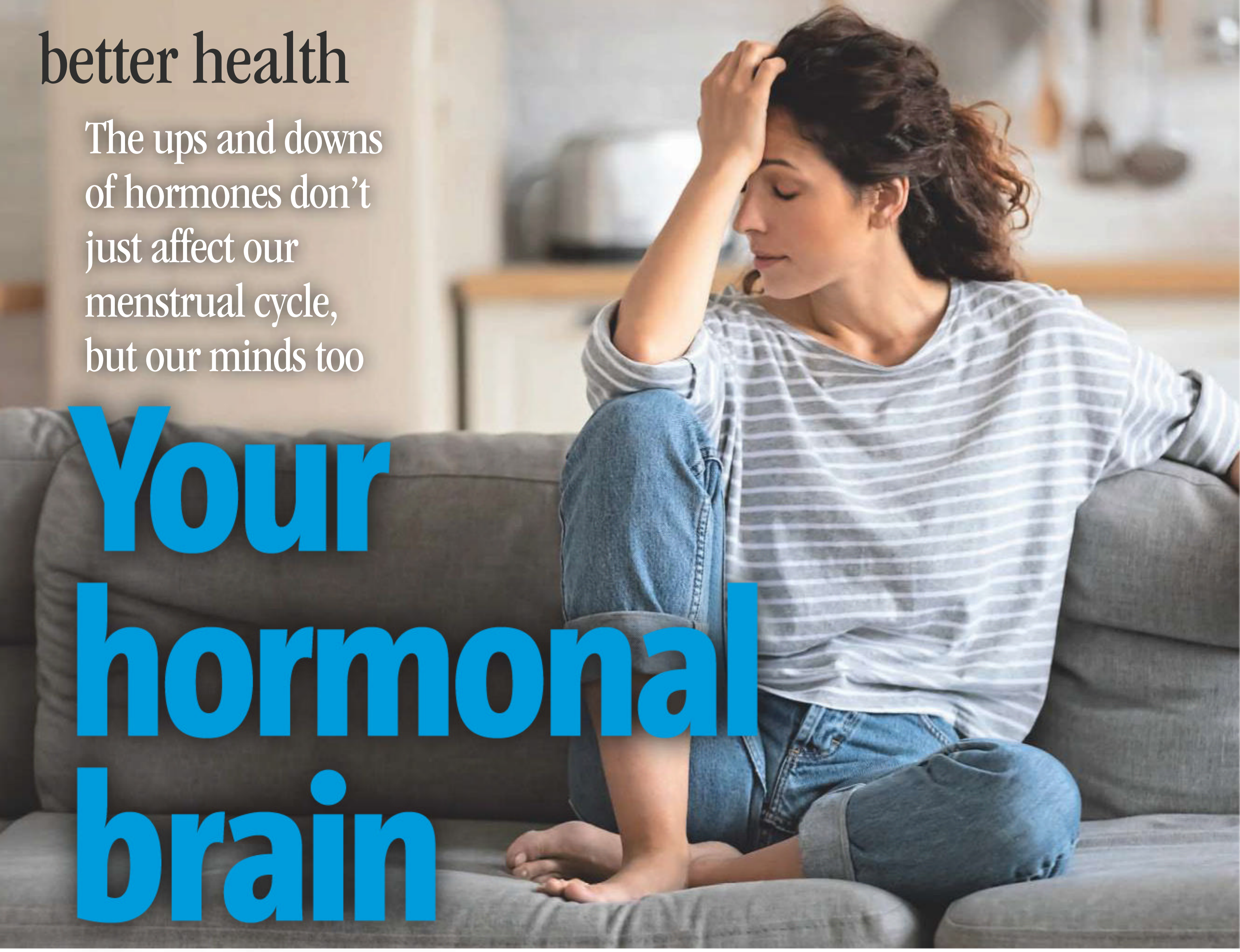
Golden syrup sponge cake

Serves 9 Takes 55min

- **115g butter, plus extra for greasing**
- **115g light brown sugar**
- **225ml golden syrup, plus 3 tbsp to finish**
- **225g gluten-free self-raising flour, sifted**
- **¼tsp xanthan gum**
- **1 large egg**
- **150ml milk**

1 *Preheat the oven to 160°C/fan 140°C. Lightly butter a 23cm square baking tin or ovenproof dish.*
2 *Put the butter, sugar and golden syrup in a medium pan and melt over a low heat, stirring occasionally. Pour it into a large bowl and leave to cool briefly.*
3 *Add the flour and xanthan gum to the bowl and mix to fully combine using an electric hand mixer. Beat together the egg and milk in a jug, then gradually pour it in, mixing as you do, until you have a smooth mixture.*
4 *Pour the mixture into the prepared baking tin and bake in the oven for 45-50min until golden and cooked through.*
5 *Remove from the oven and, after a few min, prick the top all over and drizzle on the extra golden syrup, using a hot spoon so it drizzles fairly evenly. Allow to cool and enjoy as a cake, in slices, or serve the ultimate way: hot with custard!*

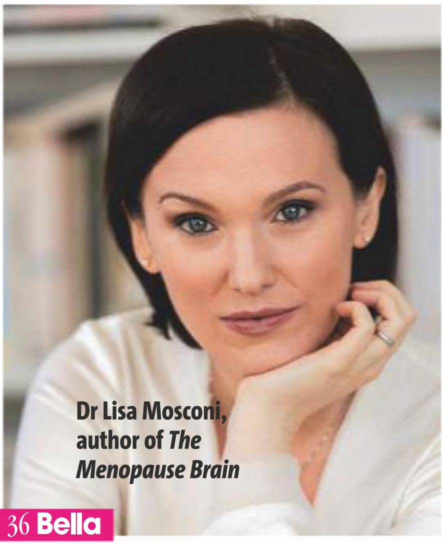
By Angela Romeo **Recipes** Becky Excell Budget Gluten Free **Pictures** Hannah Hughes



The ups and downs of hormones don't just affect our menstrual cycle, but our minds too

Your hormonal brain

Ever noticed your moods and thinking being influenced by your hormones? The link between hormones and brain health was only made in the late 1990s. 'Our ovaries are in direct communication with our brain, which is hardwired to respond to the oestrogen and other hormones they produce,' says Dr Lisa Mosconi, neuroscientist and author of *The Menopause Brain* (Allen & Unwin). 'Women's brains are hormonally, energetically, and chemically different. While these differences have no deterministic effects on intelligence or behaviour, they are crucial to supporting brain health, especially after menopause. Women are twice as likely as men to be diagnosed with an anxiety disorder or depression, twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's disease and three times more likely to develop an autoimmune disorder. They are four times more likely to suffer from headaches and migraines and more likely to be killed by a stroke.'



Dr Lisa Mosconi, author of *The Menopause Brain*

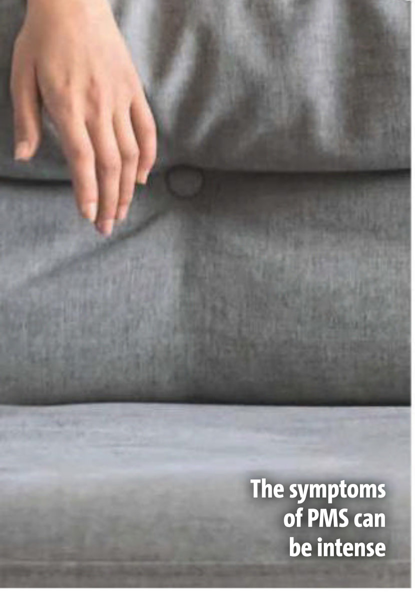
'Women's brains are hormonally and chemically different'

While all children's brains initially appear exactly the same (the default is female), after a surge in testosterone, boys' brains begin to take on male attributes. 'When we hit puberty, boys' bodies produce significantly more testosterone than girls', while girls' bodies shift into a higher oestrogen-to-testosterone ratio,' says Dr Mosconi. 'During puberty, surges in sex hormones cause a loss of grey matter, as brain connections are pruned, a process that sculpts the teen's brain into its adult form.' This streamlined brain is being primed for both growth and new forms of learning, but the prefrontal cortex – the area in charge of controlling impulses, like being self-aware enough to say, 'I'd better not do that' – is still under construction. 'As it develops, teens become better equipped to resist impulses and assess potential risks,' explains Dr Mosconi. 'The brain maturation timeline is somewhat different for boys and girls, hitting peak production when children approach sexual maturity, which is around age 11 for girls and 14 for boys. These differences have been interpreted as evidence that girls mature faster than boys.'

Unpack 'period brain'

Puberty marks the onset of the menstrual cycle, which can

Hormones affect us at every age



The symptoms of PMS can be intense

profoundly alter the circuitry of a girl's brain, impacting the way she thinks, feels and acts on a monthly basis. 'The notion that a woman's cycle can befuddle her brain is a main staple of popular culture,' says Dr Mosconi. 'Many women do experience a vulnerable side during their period, but the "period brain" is not all bad news. When estradiol (a form of oestrogen) runs higher during the first half of the month, brain cells visibly sprout new spines that reach out and connect with other cells – which helps us feel more focused. Verbal fluency, communication, and social responsiveness are heightened. As estradiol recedes during the second part of the cycle, some connections between neurons also recede. This has been linked to low mood, irritability, headaches, and even fatigue or sleepiness for some women, while others can feel sad or tearful – one out of four women suffer from clinical PMS, a condition characterised by irritability, tension, depressed mood, tearfulness, and mood swings at specific times of the month.'

Maternal matters

Just as with puberty, pregnancy is marked by extensive reductions in the brain's grey matter. 'A computer algorithm could predict with complete accuracy whether a woman had been pregnant just by looking at her brain,' says Dr Mosconi. 'When skills become second nature, the brain no longer needs to hold the neuronal space to support them. This "automatic pilot" function allows the brain to dump what's superfluous and refurbish new mental pathways so mothers can better respond to motherhood's myriad demands.' Dr Mosconi says research shows the hippocampus (responsible for forming and storing new memories) and amygdala (which processes emotions) grow back, returning to pre-pregnancy levels after a few years. The frontal cortex also displayed a similar restoration.

What about mummy brain, the term used to describe the memory loss and brain fog that many pregnant and postpartum women experience? Dr Mosconi says stress and sleep deprivation is the reason over 80% of pregnant women perceive a decline in cognitive function. 'New mothers' IQ is unquestionably unaltered. There is also no evidence these mental blips might be linked to a higher risk of dementia.'

One in eight new mums will suffer from postpartum depression with symptoms including mood swings, crying spells, anxiety, and difficulty sleeping. 'These mood swings can be similar to those of PMS – and even related to it, as women suffering from PMS before pregnancy are more likely to experience altered mood and depression during pregnancy,' says Dr Mosconi. Treatment includes talking therapy and medication when needed. While lower oestrogen production has been linked to postpartum depression, supplementing oestrogen is not recommended as a treatment as it brings a risk of stroke and deep vein thrombosis, but research continues.

The fog

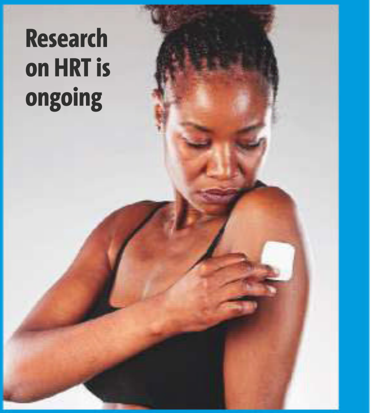
Recent statistics show over 60% of all perimenopausal and postmenopausal women struggle with brain fog. 'Forgetfulness can spike during perimenopause, which can feed fears of experiencing early dementia,' says Dr Mosconi. 'While menopausal brain fog hasn't been the subject of much research, there is robust evidence that, typically, it is a temporary change, and that mental sharpness recuperates after menopause.'

Dr Mosconi says that, while it's true research has shown women entering the perimenopause display a decrease in cognitive function in tests than before they were perimenopausal, even during the memory dip phase, women outperformed men on average on those very same cognitive tests measuring memory, fluency, and some forms of attention. 'That's true both before and after menopause,' says Dr Mosconi. 'After the menopause, these same women's cognitive performance returned more or less to their previous scores.'

> 'The menstrual cycle profoundly alters brain circuitry'

CAN HRT PREVENT DEMENTIA?

Doctors are still looking for clear answers. In 2021, a study of nearly 400,000 women found both new and old HRT drugs reduced the risk of diseases that cause dementia, with the effects dependent on dose, type of medication, length of treatment, age, and time from menopause. Another study in Denmark, following dementia rates of over 55,000 women, showed the opposite, that HRT increases dementia risk. The Alzheimer's Society explains studies only show a connection between dementia and HRT, but they can't tell us if HRT leads to dementia. Brain fog is a common symptom of menopause, but HRT may mistakenly be prescribed for those in the early stages of dementia, skewing the numbers. 'Taking HRT solely to prevent Alzheimer's disease is not currently recommended,' says Dr Mosconi. 'We need more research. If you are taking HRT for other symptoms, hopefully it helps with Alzheimer's prevention too.'



Research on HRT is ongoing

By Lucy Hunter, **Pictures** Shutterstock

Best in sto

Gingham frill cushion, £10; Artichoke bowl, £14; Printed rose frill cushion, £9; Ruffle stripe cushion, £10; Hammered glass Lamp, £28; Gingham throw, £15; Hammered glass lamp, £28, all At Home with Stacey Solomon

George Home at Asda

Stacey Solomon's new collection is full of on-trend gingham patterns, daisy prints and soft colours all inspired by her beautiful home, Pickle Cottage. The collection covers every room of the home from kitchen and bedroom to bathroom and dining room.

HOME COMFORTS
OUR HAPPY PLACE
OUR HAPPY PLACE

Faux books, £12 for three

Embroidered cushion, £12

Daisy embossed towels, from **£5**

Pink 12-piece dinner set, £35

happiest at home

At home sign, £4

Matalan

Bold colours, tropical prints and funky furniture are key to this summer inspired look. Fruity prints are also popular in store with a selection of fun accessories that will work well with this tropical look.

Faux orchid, £40

Bar LED sign, £18

Strawberry stool, £48

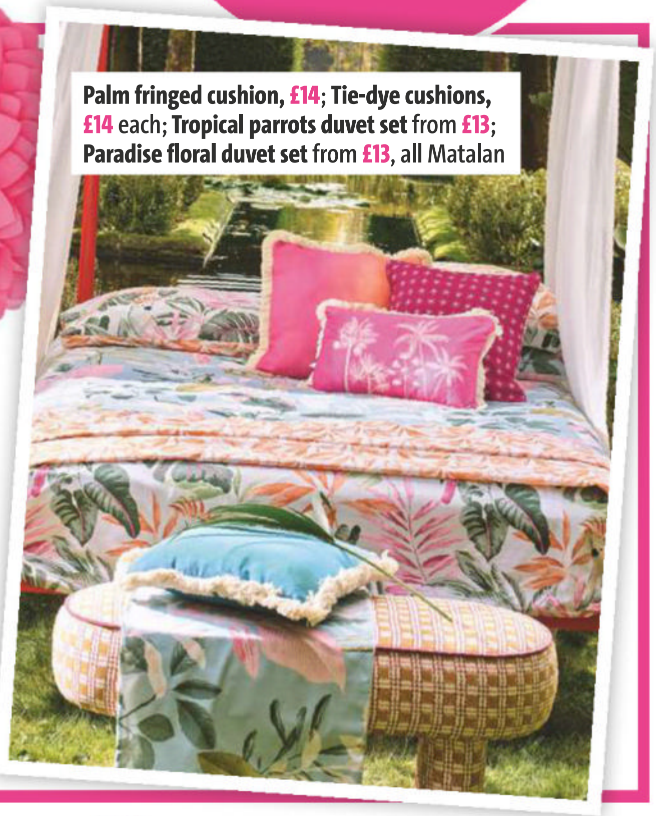
Home doormat, £8.50

Napkin rings, £3 for two; **Embroidered napkins, £3.50** for two; **Leaf embossed side plates, £4; Lily dinner plate, £7; Print tablecloth, £10** all Primark

re

Head to the high street and grab the essentials for your summer home

Pink flower cushion, £16


Palm fringed cushion, £14; **Tie-dye cushions,** £14 each; **Tropical parrots duvet set** from £13; **Paradise floral duvet set** from £13, all Matalan

Primark

Create the perfect tablescape with co-ordinated china and linen. Primark has a huge range of quality buys in tones of green, which will add interest to any dining occasion.

Mini candles, £5 for three

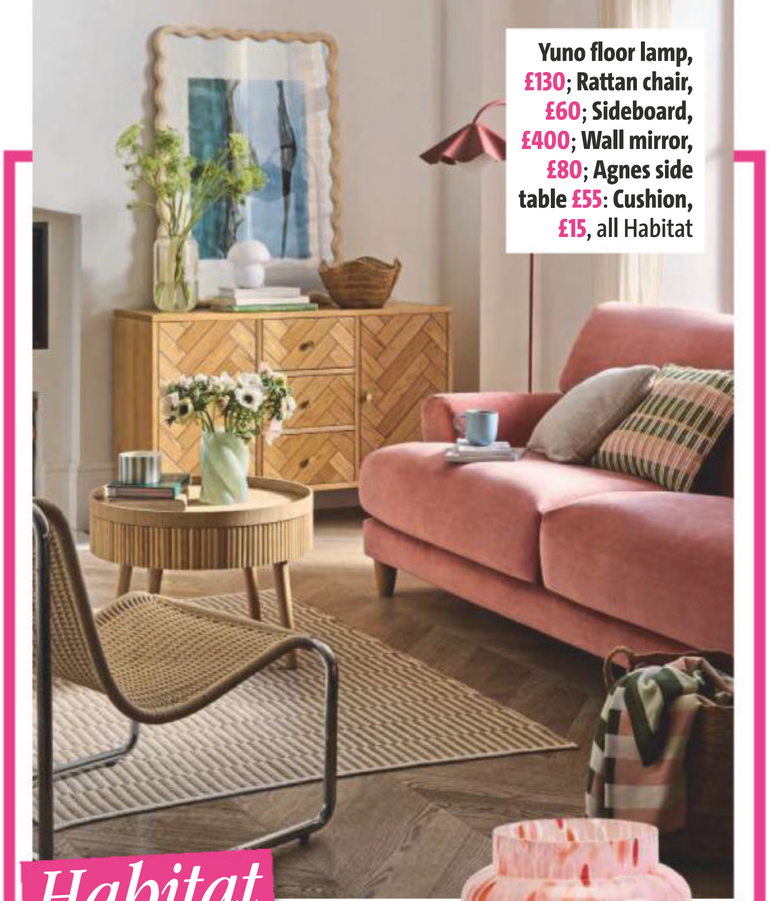
WHITE LILY
65 G e NET WT 2.2OZ

Candle jar, £4

Basket, £6

Embossed tumbler, £2.50

Jacquard cushion, £10


Yuno floor lamp, £130; **Rattan chair,** £60; **Sideboard,** £400; **Wall mirror,** £80; **Agnes side table** £55: **Cushion,** £15, all Habitat

Habitat

This relaxed look is easily achieved in any home. Soft colours teamed with light wood furniture will bring texture and style while on-trend scalloped accessories add a fun finish.

Pink confetti candle, £15

Hazen side table, £80

Knitted throw, £22

Trailing plant, £5

Wavy bowl, £18

Pink twist vase, £12

By Zoe Bishop

THE DARKEST CRIMES AND EVIL MINDS

CRIME MONTHLY

TRURO MURDERS: SERIAL KILLER SLAYS 7 WOMEN

ZIZIAN CULT HORROR: LEADER FINALLY ARRESTED AFTER 6 HOMICIDES

ABUSE SCANDAL: YOUTUBE MUM WHO BECAME A MONSTER

CRIME MONTHLY

ISSUE 75
MAY 2025

THE DARKEST CRIMES AND EVIL MINDS

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HUSBAND FROM HELL
EVIL DOCTOR PUSHES WIFE OFF A CLIFF

DARK OBSESSION
STALKED TO DEATH?
WHITNEY'S HIGH-SCHOOL FRIEND'S INFATUATION TURNED TO TERROR

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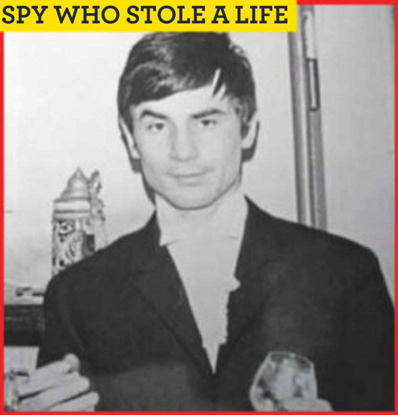

CRIME FOR KICKS

ISSUE 75 ON SALE 1 MAY

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Email: bella.letters@bauermedia.co.uk
facebook.com/bellamagazineUK
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£50 Star letter

Susan's comeback

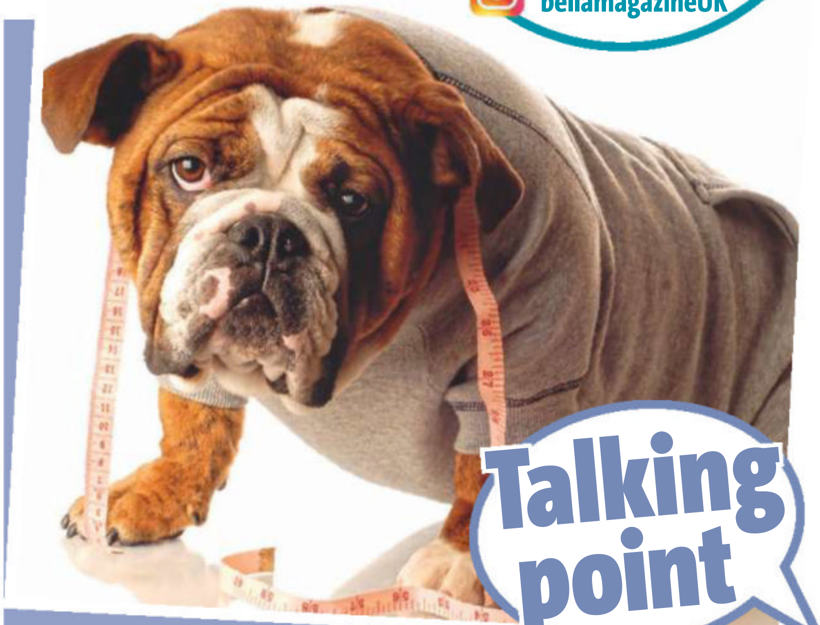
How good is it to see Susan Boyle back (issue 15) at 64? This is a woman who people ridiculed when she first walked on to the *Britain's Got Talent* stage – then she started to sing. Multiple albums and 16 years later, she's having the last laugh! I hope she enjoys her milestone birthday.

Jenny Beeson, Norwich

Girl power!

I loved reading your feature about how all of the *Loose Women* are getting on better than ever (issue 14). I have to say, the show has got really good in recent times – I love the mix of women and the topics they choose to discuss. I watch every day!

Louise Needham, Broadstairs



Talking point

According to recent figures, vets estimated 46 per cent of dogs were overweight or obese. So, we ask, is it wrong to fat shame pets?

How can you shame an animal? This is so hilarious.
Carrie Rockford, via Facebook

Why do people feel the need to comment on things like this? Unless the pet is completely neglected, I can't imagine saying something.
Roy Crossland, via Facebook

I would be so annoyed if someone commented on my pet, the same as I would if it was my child.
Anonymous, via Facebook

People should keep their opinions to themselves!
Bethanny Smith, via Facebook

By Stephen Leng, **Pictures** Getty, Shutterstock

THIS WEEK Bella LOVES...

The Gym Kitchen

It's starting to get towards barbecue season – we've already fired ours up once – and if you're looking for a healthier alternative to a pork sausage, The Gym Kitchen's high-protein chicken sausages could be just the thing. Meaty, tasty, and in flavours such as piri-piri, original or roasted onion, they're a perfect treat for warmer days and al-fresco dining! Available from Tesco stores nationwide, make sure to check them out.

THE GYM KITCHEN
HIGH PROTEIN
PIRI PIRI
CHICKEN
SAUSAGES

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'Breaking my leg on honeymoon cost me £21,000!'

Alyssa Fuller, 38, couldn't wait to jet off to Mexico with her new husband, but disaster struck on the first day…

The first day of their holiday

Opening the curtains and gazing at the beautiful view of the ocean, I couldn't believe how lucky I was. 'Isn't it gorgeous,' I said to my new husband, Jeremy. 'Let's have breakfast and relax by the pool today.' As he smiled and gave me a hug, I couldn't have been happier. It was October 2023 and we'd arrived late the previous night at our luxury all-inclusive resort in Mexico for an eight-day honeymoon. After a hectic few months preparing for our wedding we couldn't wait to chill out.

The couple getting married

We'd had a magical wedding with 200 family and friends, although at one point we feared it might not happen. Just months earlier, in January that year, I'd slipped on ice and shattered my knee leaving me unable to walk for weeks. Doctors had glued it back together and I'd worked hard doing physiotherapy to recover for our big day. Luckily, I was fit enough for the first dance to our favourite song, *At Last* by Etta James. Now, I felt my bad luck was over and I could relax in this beautiful resort with the man of my dreams.

After breakfast, we headed back to the pool and sunk into the warm water. It had been raining the day before, but thankfully the sun was now out and it was a lovely balmy morning. 'Let's go snorkelling later in the week,' Jeremy said. 'Sounds like a great idea,' I said. The pool was warm and relaxing as we swam and chatted. After half an hour, we decided to get out, dry off and head to the beach. I swam to the side and climbed out of the pool, with Jeremy following me. But just as I'd taken a few steps on the slippery porcelain floor, I lost my balance and fell over…

The next thing I knew I was on the floor in total shock. Jeremy was by my side in an instant, asking if I was OK. 'I don't think so,' I cried. I knew something terrible had happened because I felt a dreadful pain in my leg and hand and knew there was no way I could get up. All around, hotel guests came running to help. One woman held my head, and another guest managed to run and fetch a doctor who was on the resort. 'We've called an ambulance,' the doctor said. 'How bad it is?' I asked. When he replied that I probably shouldn't look, I knew it wasn't good. I lay there shivering in shock and pain, with Jeremy holding my hand, for at least two hours before the ambulance finally arrived. Relief swept over me when I saw the paramedics approach, but before

Alyssa in hospital

they would do anything they asked for £700. We couldn't believe it, but were desperate, so Jeremy pulled out his credit card and immediately paid.

Once at the hospital, I thought the worst was over, but they stopped us at the door demanding another £1,400. Once again, we had no choice but to pay. Then I was wheeled to the X-ray room in agony as I'd had no pain relief. After the X-ray, I asked the radiographer how bad it was, but all he did was shake his head. 'It's really bad. Really, really bad,' he replied in broken English. Terrified, I was taken back into A&E where, thankfully, Jeremy was waiting for me. More doctors arrived and took me to another room but asked Jeremy to leave. Then, to my horror, four of them held me down as they set my leg with no pain relief. The pain was so bad, I felt delirious and thought I would pass out.

At last Jeremy was allowed in to see me but there was more bad news. 'We need to operate, but it will cost £30k,' the doctors told us. I burst into tears and looked at Jeremy in shock. They told us I'd broken my wrist, as well as my fibula and tibia, the two main bones in my left leg. I couldn't believe it, especially as it was the same leg I'd hurt when I'd fallen over the previous time. Leaving me, Jeremy dashed off to call his parents to see if there were other options, but soon returned looking downbeat. 'I think we have to pay the money and get you sorted. What else can we do?' We'd assumed our holiday would be covered by our credit card travel insurance, but Jeremy said he'd called and checked and we weren't. By that time, I was in so much pain, I'd have agreed to anything.

'It's really, really bad'

The next day, Jeremy found out we could get an air ambulance to fly us home, but that it would cost £30,000. 'We just don't have that money,' I cried. Later, he managed to ring round and find one for £14,000, which we decided we'd have to go for, but the doctor wouldn't discharge us that evening. We had to stay another night at a further cost of £3,300. Eventually we were picked up and headed to the airport. For the first time in four days, I was given morphine and was out of pain. Back home, I needed two operations over the next few days to reset the bones and have pins and a plate inserted.

Finally, after five more days in hospital, I was allowed to go home to see my family and friends. Because we were liable for the medical costs, we ended up paying £21,000 for a honeymoon that had lasted less than a day! We had to put everything onto our credit cards. Luckily family and friends rallied and managed to raise half the amount on a GoFundMe page, which was such a relief and I was so grateful. We had to gradually pay off the rest ourselves.

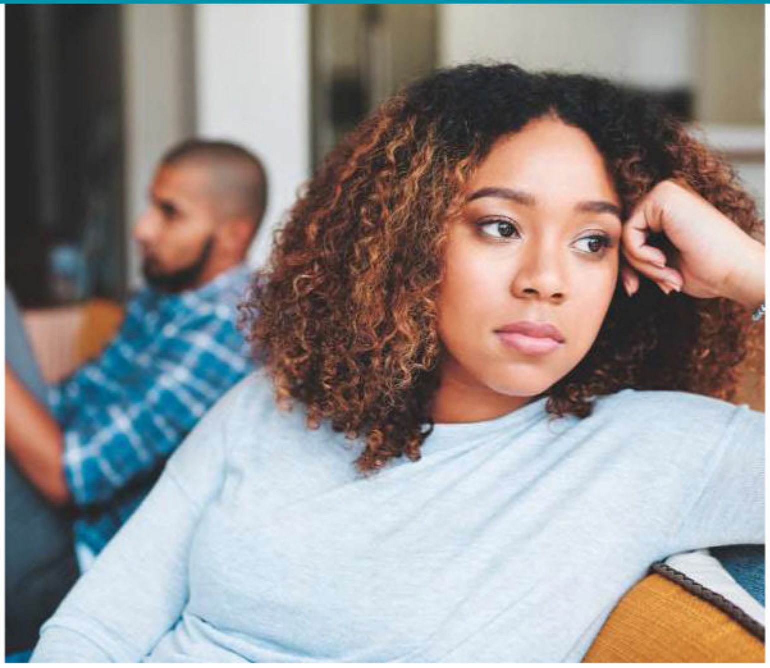
After months of physio, I'm still not fully recovered – it's a long journey. This hasn't put us off travelling though, but next time we'll make sure we take out the best travel insurance. We fully intend to book another honeymoon because we think it's the least we deserve!

By Kate Graham and Helen Garston **Pictures** Erin Bruch-Looney

Dear Kate...

Counsellor Kate Medlin answers your personal, sexual and emotional problems

Five years in and I'm still a secret



Q I've been with my boyfriend for over five years, since we were at uni together. He comes from a religious family and his parents expect him to marry someone who is from their community. So I have never met them, and they don't even know that he has a girlfriend. At first, it didn't matter. It was exciting and I never felt like I needed to be involved with his family. But as we've got older, and our friends have started to get engaged and settle down, I'm wondering what our future looks like, or if we even have one. I have asked him to talk to his parents, but he said it's not worth the hassle. Does that mean I'm not worth it? Is he using me to have fun, but will then throw me away when he's ready to get married to someone his parents will approve of? How do I force the issue? I don't want to give him an ultimatum, but it feels like that's becoming my only option.

A When I worked for a university counselling service, this was a very common issue the students struggled with. Exploring parts of their identity which might not meet with the approval of their families. Whether they were going out with someone outside of their community, or coming to terms with their sexuality, they often felt they had to make a choice between their family and living their life the way they wanted to. Depending on how strict and rigid your boyfriend's family are, he may well risk losing them if he comes clean about his relationship with you. I think it's important that you understand exactly what he stands to lose. However, that doesn't mean you don't have the right to feel, and express, your unhappiness with the current situation. No matter how you both feel about the relationship, the cloud hanging over you is casting

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Help with my in-laws!

Q My husband and I sold our house, and while we look for a place to buy we've been staying with his parents. I really appreciate them letting us stay, but I'm finding my mother-in-law's constant comments about me really annoying. She criticises my food choices (I'm a vegetarian) and asks me, 'Why are you wearing that?'. She tells me that I should be ironing my husband's shirts and doesn't like the fact that we share household chores like cooking. My husband does light-heartedly tell her off, but it's making me want to move away! Am I overreacting?

A Your mother-in-law doesn't sound like a happy woman to me. When someone is pointing a disapproving finger at you, it says a lot about the way they feel about themselves. Maybe she's jealous that you don't iron your husband's shirts and that he shares the domestic load equally with you. If you and your husband are comfortable with your own life choices, try to let her comments slide off you, rather than holding onto them. Living with other people, especially one's in-laws, is rarely a walk in the park. And as you're living in her home, you are having to bite your lip while she seems able to speak freely without a filter! Hang on in there, it won't be long until you have a home of your own, and you can wear and eat what you like without feeling her disapproving gaze!

She told everyone my secret

Q After working for the same company for 38 years, I was let go because I made a mistake that they couldn't ignore. I was so humiliated and ashamed and still am. I was two years away from retirement, so I told most people that I retired. But I told my closest friends the truth. One of them had a birthday party recently and when she did a speech, she casually mentioned to everyone that I'd been fired. I went bright red and wanted the earth to swallow me up. I haven't mentioned it since because I don't know what to say. Should I let it go?

A Friendships don't have to be perfect, but it's important when a friend does something that doesn't feel nice to give them feedback. Because otherwise, how will they learn more about you? It's important that you explain how it made you feel. You don't need to accuse her of doing something wrong, because this may lead to her becoming defensive. Just say

Letters and replies may be edited for length/clarity. **Pictures:** Getty, Shutterstock

Write to **Dear Kate**,
Bella, The Lantern,
75 Hampstead Road,
London, NW1 2PL, or email
bella.advice@bauermedia.co.uk.

Kate will attempt to respond to as many letters as possible through her page

a shadow that leaves you feeling like you aren't good enough. While you don't want to give your boyfriend an ultimatum, perhaps it's time you had a conversation about the future. Does he see you overcoming this difficulty? And if so, what is he waiting for? While it's understandable that he wants to avoid this difficult conversation, what does that mean for the two of you? Does he really think he would be excluded from the family or is this just a fear based on an assumption, but without any real evidence? Sometimes, parents react very differently from how their children expect them to. Most are able to overcome their differences because they just want their children to be happy. But if this isn't the case for your boyfriend, then perhaps he will need to make a choice. But you also have a choice – stay in the shadows, or step into the light, with or without him.

---

something like, 'I understand that you were just telling the truth, but I feel so much shame around what happened that I chose who I wanted to tell. I felt hurt that you revealed my truth when I'd chosen not to.'

Do you suffer from anxiety?
0906 652 5070
Getting over depression?
0906 652 5076
Bereavement
0906 652 5077
Impotence
0906 652 5078
Relationship breakdown
0906 652 5079

BELLA ADVICE LINES

Calls cost 65p per minute plus your network access charge. Calls last approximately four minutes. You must be over 18 to call and have the bill payer's permission. UK SP: Spoke 0333 202 3390

Horoscopes

By Jane Struthers **For the week 29 April–5 May**

GEMINI

22 May – 21 June

Friendships play an extra important part in your life from early in the week, so it's a great opportunity to reunite with old chums and also to make some new ones. Feelings run high on the 3rd, especially when it comes to discussing ideas or beliefs.

Theme of the week: Conviviality

☎ 0906 650 7232

CANCER

22 June – 23 July

You have a high opinion of someone on the 2nd, but don't idealise them too much – they have as many flaws as everyone else. Follow up travel arrangements on the 3rd, because it's a good day for making sure that everything is running smoothly.

Theme of the week: Mentors

☎ 0906 650 7233

LEO

24 July – 23 August

You simply can't resist the prospect of an adventure right now, and it will be even better if it takes you away from your usual routines into uncharted territory. Take the first steps in a confidence-boosting project on the 4th.

Theme of the week: Enjoyment

☎ 0906 650 7234

VIRGO

24 August – 23 September

If joint finances have been something of a trial recently, help is on its way. From early in the week there will be increased goodwill and co-operation between you. Focus on the positives on the 5th, when you benefit from someone's guidance.

Theme of the week: Deep feelings

☎ 0906 650 7235

LIBRA

24 September – 23 October

You're on familiar ground from early in the week, thanks to an emphasis on fitting in with others and keeping them happy. Of course, this doesn't mean putting yourself second all the time, because that will eventually make you feel resentful.

Theme of the week: Togetherness

☎ 0906 650 7236

SCORPIO

24 October – 22 November

Last week's fractious goings-on with you-know-who may be in the past but they haven't faded completely. Talking them through makes a huge difference on the 2nd. You can do more emotional spring cleaning on the 3rd if you vow to release a long-held grudge.

Theme of the week: Self-care

☎ 0906 650 7237

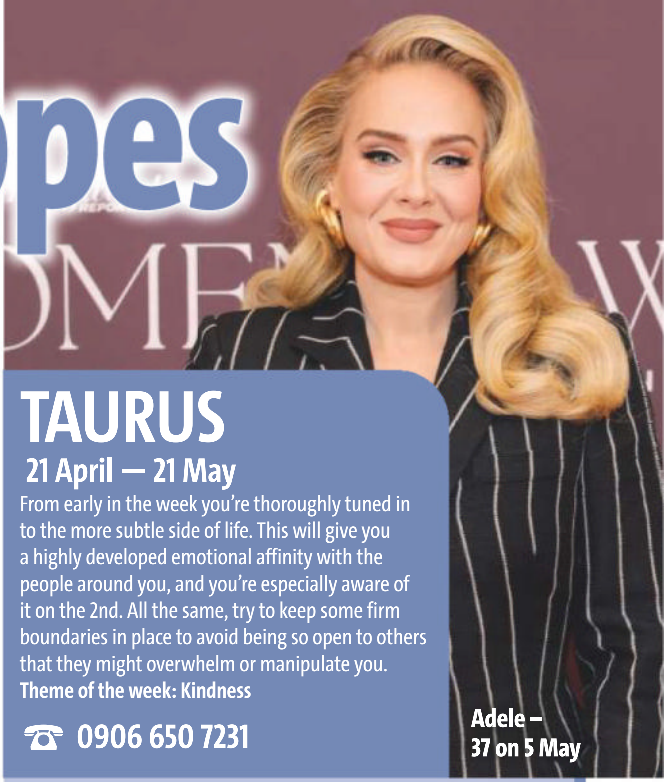
SAGITTARIUS

23 November – 21 December

Fancy having some fun? Then the next four weeks will be just what you need. Seek out companions who amuse and delight you, get involved in creative projects that set fire to your imagination, and view the world with love and appreciation.

Theme of the week: Romance

☎ 0906 650 7238



Adele – 37 on 5 May

TAURUS

21 April – 21 May

From early in the week you're thoroughly tuned in to the more subtle side of life. This will give you a highly developed emotional affinity with the people around you, and you're especially aware of it on the 2nd. All the same, try to keep some firm boundaries in place to avoid being so open to others that they might overwhelm or manipulate you.

Theme of the week: Kindness

☎ 0906 650 7231

CAPRICORN

22 December – 20 January

Home is where the heart is, and this is a perfect week for rediscovering the truth of that. Gravitate towards the people and places that are reassuringly familiar. You're swept away by sentimental nostalgia on the 2nd but try not to rewrite history.

Theme of the week: Nest-building

☎ 0906 650 7239

AQUARIUS

21 January – 19 February

You have a diplomatic way with words from the start of the week, which is just what you need for avoiding arguments. Nevertheless, there are some bumpy moments on the 3rd when you clash with someone with an obvious power complex.

Theme of the week: Socialising

☎ 0906 650 7240

PISCES

20 February – 20 March

It's a big week for your personal finances. When it comes to spending money, remind yourself of where your priorities lie and what makes you happy. Be strong-willed on the 2nd when you're very tempted to splash out on all sorts of lovely indulgences.

Theme of the week: Connections

☎ 0906 650 7241

ARIES

21 March – 20 April

Your charm rating is starting to shoot through the roof, making this a great week to mix with others. Of course, it's also very helpful if you need to apologise for something or appeal to someone's better nature, and the 2nd is perfect for doing just that.

Theme of the week: Charisma

☎ 0906 650 7230

For a more detailed weekly forecast call the number for your star sign. Calls cost 65p per minute plus your network access charge. Weekly forecasts last approximately four minutes. Messages are pre-recorded. For entertainment and guidance purposes only. Users must be over 18. Service provider: Spoke. Customer service number 0333 202 3390 (9am-5pm).

BIG APPLE ON A BUDGET

Visit New York City without breaking the bank…

Getting there

New York is one of the most exciting cities in the world, but also one of the most expensive. With a few tips, however, you can experience it for a fraction of the price. We flew with budget airline Norse Atlantic, which offers return flights from under £300pp, a great saving before you've even landed in the Big Apple. Stay in the heart of the city to reduce transport costs, and opt for no-frills accommodation. The Riu Plaza New York Times Square is just one block from the action. The rooms are basic, but have comfy beds and everything you need to unwind after a long day exploring.

Save on the sights

There are so many iconic landmarks to see in NYC, but individual entry costs can quickly add up. If you want to visit multiple attractions, invest in a CityPASS, which gives you discounted entrance to attractions including the Empire State Building Observatory, 9/11 Memorial & Museum, Ellis Island and lots more – perfect for first-time visitors. Use the pass to head to the Top of the Rock for panoramic views of the city and try out their latest attraction, Skylift, which opened last October. This takes you up an extra three storeys above the main observation deck for a unique rotating 360-degree experience.

Affordable eats

New York is home to more than 70 Michelin-starred restaurants, but you can still dine like a king for much less at countless delis and bodegas. Take the A Man and His Sandwich Tour around the East Village. For around $60, you'll be treated to a history of the iconic snack, discover more about the area and get to chow down on some amazing local sandwiches – Factory Tamal's Black Forest Ham Panini is not to be missed!

For classic NYC bagels, we loved Black Seed Bagels where the portions were huge and the bagels cost around $5.

A visit to Joe's Pizza is also a must. Serving pizza by the slice for more than 47 years, Joe's is loved by celebs, locals and tourists. With slices costing just a few dollars, you can't go wrong!

Showtime!

Seeing a Broadway show is a bucket-list moment, but the hefty price of tickets makes it expensive. There are plenty of fabulous off-Broadway shows, however, for a fraction of the price. Lots, like *Hamilton*, go on to become Broadway productions, so you'll have the privilege of seeing something before everyone else. We saw *DRAG: The Musical* at New World Stages and it was the perfect blend of camp humour, a heartwarming story and catchy tunes. If you've still got your heart set on Broadway, the TodayTix app is a great way to get last-minute discounted tickets.

War Horse
5 TONY AWARDS 2011 BEST PLAY
LINCOLN CENTER THEATER
PRISCILLA
QUEEN OF THE DESERT
The #1 LONGEST RUNNING AMERICAN MUSICAL in Broadway History!
OUTRAGEOUS FUN!
GUEST SUITES
FUEL
MONEY EXCHAN
NYC TAXI

The Bronx
BEER HALL

Bronx bound

To see New York from a new perspective, head out of Manhattan to one of the four other boroughs. The Bronx is a 20-minute train ride from Grand Central Station, with tickets costing only $5. Have a Big Apple Greeter guide show you around, as they offer great personal recommendations and unique facts about the area. Head to Arthur Avenue, the Bronx's Little Italy, and stop at Mike's Deli for pasta – don't miss the incredible Eggplant Parmigiana – and Delillo Pastry Shop for sweet treats. Round off your visit at the Bronx Beer Hall – the Cider Saké Cocktail is a must!

NEED TO KNOW

- Room rates at Riu Plaza New York Times Square start from £112 per night. Book at riu.com. Return Economy flights from London Gatwick to JFK with Norse Atlantic start from £279pp. Book at flynorse.com
- A New York CityPASS starts from £88.46pp. Purchase at citypass.com
- For more information, visit nyctourism.com

By Lucy Brown, **Pictures** Alamy, A Man and His Sandwich, Getty, New York City Tourism + Conventions, Shutterstock

TV WEEK

The Handmaid's Tale

Saturday 3 May, C4

As the final season of dystopian saga *The Handmaid's Tale* begins, protagonist June is determined to take down the totalitarian society of Gilead. But she also has to deal with some worrying news from the men in her life, husband Luke and lover Nick. The sixth and final chapter of the Emmy Award-winning series, adapted from the novel by Margaret Atwood, sees Luke (O-T Fagbenle) released from prison for attempting to flee Gilead (formerly the USA). 'When Luke gets out, he has such a fire within him,' says Elisabeth Moss, who plays June. 'He has been waiting and waiting to be able to join this fight, to be able to get in there and try to get their daughter Hannah back himself.'

PSYCHIATRIC UNIT

MALPRACTICE

Sunday 4 May, ITV1

This tense and gripping medical thriller returns for a second series, this time focusing on psychiatric registrar Dr James Ford (Tom Hughes) who is just over halfway through his placement at Queen Mother's University Hospital in North Yorkshire. While his personal life is a mess, and his colleagues find him arrogant, James is committed to his vulnerable patients. When the first episode begins he's caught in a busy shift between an anxious new mother's postnatal check-up and the sectioning of a psychotic patient, but the outcome is devastating and leaves his career hanging in the balance.

VE Day 80th Anniversary

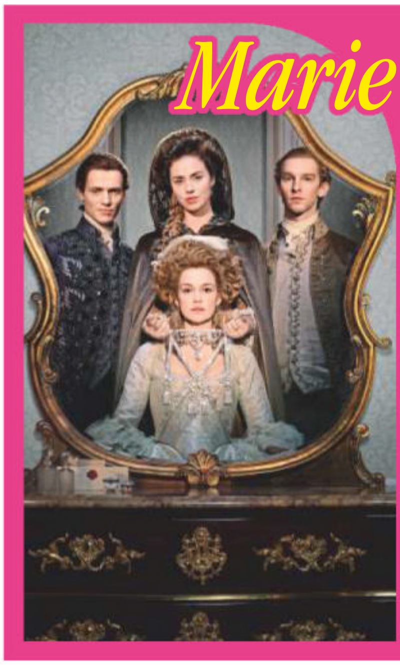
Thursday 8 May, BBC1

It's 80 years since the Second World War ended in Europe and the historic occasion will be marked by three live broadcasts hosted by Sophie Raworth and Zoe Ball, as well as themed programmes throughout the week. On Thursday, a service of Thanksgiving from Westminster Abbey will be shown where Petroc Trelawny provides commentary, while Sophie is joined in the studio by special guests sharing their wartime memories. Meanwhile, Zoe hosts a concert on Horse Guards Parade featuring an orchestra performing wartime classic favourites like *We'll Meet Again* and *The White Cliffs of Dover.*

By Cecile Metcalf, Jim Maloney, Amber Connolly and Amy Rowland, **Pictures** Apple, Channel 4, ITV, Channel 5, Penguin

NEW THIS WEEK

Marie Antoinette



Thursday 8 May, BBC2

It's 1783, and Paris is experiencing one of the coldest winters on record. Marie Antoinette has produced a male heir and is popular among the people of France. But there are powerful enemies lurking, threatening her reputation and the rule of her husband Louis XVI as the drama returns for its second series. 'Season two is much more high stakes, everything is leading up to the French Revolution and it's very spicy,' says Emilia Schüle, who plays Marie Antoinette. 'She's now a mother and dedicated queen. Her reign is at its peak, but it's not easy at Versailles – there are never-ending forces working against her.'

LONG WAY HOME

Friday 9 May, Apple TV +

'This summer, Europe is our playground!' declares TV and movie star Ewan McGregor, about hitting the small screen in new series *Long Way Home*, a follow-up to 2020's *Long Way Up*. The journey begins at Ewan's home in Scotland and finishes at his good friend Charley Boorman's gaff in England but, rather than take the shortest route, they've chosen a scenic itinerary taking in Scandinavia, the Arctic Circle, the Baltics and continental Europe. They film personal video diaries along the way, with episode one following the duo as they travel through the Netherlands.

THE SENTENCE: YOU BE THE JUDGE

Tuesday 6 May, 5

Nearly three-quarters of the British public believe that sentencing is far too soft on convicted criminals in the UK. Now Anne Robinson gives you the chance to play judge in this new social experiment, as four actual sentence hearings are reconstructed. And you will have the chance to see how your verdict compares with that of four distinct groups of people presiding over the cases – relatives of murder victims, ex-police, former criminals and retired judges. Anne explains how it all works. 'We've singled out four historic cases and we reconstruct the sentence hearings so you see how the judges arrived at the figure of the sentence.'

FILM

Borrowed Time: Lennon's Last Decade

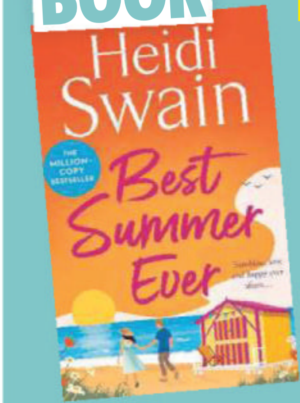
This new documentary explores the final years of John Lennon's life as he evolves beyond The Beatles, creates revolutionary music and stands at the forefront of anti-war protests. Featuring rare archive footage, never-before-seen interviews and exclusive new stories – including the full account of how John and Yoko met – the film immerses us into the world of one of the most influential pop culture icons of all time.

EVENT

SEA LIFE UK Animal Crossing: New Horizons

The popular Nintendo game has teamed up with the aquarium chain for a live, interactive experience discovering incredible marine life. From zebra sharks to green sea turtles, there are thousands of creatures to find alongside characters Tom Nook, Aurora, Octavian and more. Currently in Birmingham, the tour is also making its way to Brighton, London and Chessington World of Adventures. Go to visitsealife.com for more info.

BOOK

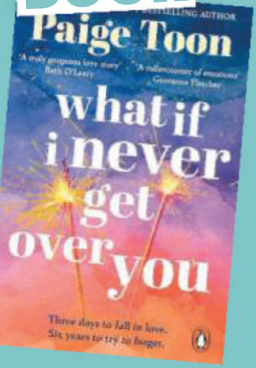


Best Summer Ever

by Heidi Swain (Simon&Schuster)

When Daisy drives back to Wynmouth having left both her job and the man she thought she'd marry, she believes that coming home could be just what she needs to move on. But at Wynbrook Manor, where her mum and dad both work, things are in disarray. As Daisy tries to find her place among the chaos, she's drawn to summer visitor Josh. But when he turns out to not be the person he appears to be, will the spark between them fizzle out – or could it turn into the best summer ever? A sweet read.

BOOK



What if I Never Get Over You

By Paige Toon (Penguin)

Ellie never expected to fall in love while travelling, until she met Ash. After three intense days together in Lisbon, they planned to reunite in Madrid. But Ellie arrived late, and Ash was gone. Six years later, Ellie still carries the memory of their connection. Hoping for a fresh start, she takes her dream job as a gardener on a remote estate in Wales. But just as she begins to settle into her new life, Ash suddenly reappears and Ellie must decide if this is fate giving her a second chance... A stunning read, full of charm.

Dermot O'Leary, Katherine Ryan and Seann Walsh on why silence is golden…

'It's a really interest SOCIAL EXPERIMEN

Six years after he last hosted *The X Factor*, Dermot O'Leary is back in front of a studio audience for his new show – but this time he'll be getting a very different reaction. Long gone are the days of Dermot, 51, eliciting wild screams from the crowd as he tells us our Saturday night starts right here, because this time his audience are doing everything they can to keep deathly silent.

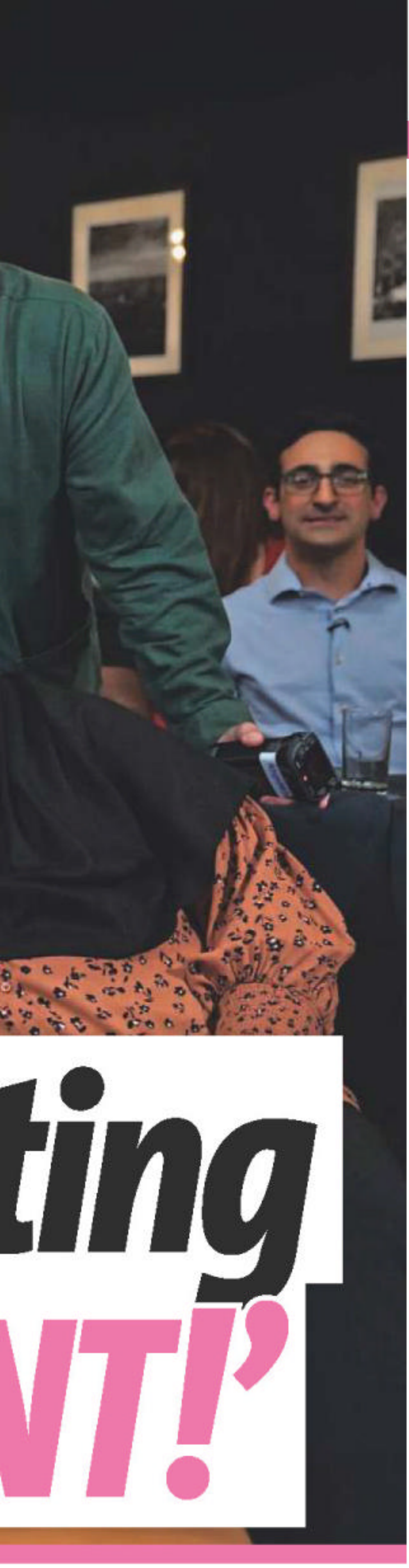
For in his new show *Silence is Golden*, Dermot has teamed up with comedians Katherine Ryan, 41, Seann Walsh, 39, and Fatiha El-Ghorri, 43, to try to win back the £250,000 prize fund from the audience who will get to keep every single penny to share between them if they fail to react to a whole host of variety acts that will perform for them. Here, Dermot, Katherine and Seann tell us what we need to know about the unique show…

What appealed to you about the concept of *Silence is Golden?*

Katherine: For me it was the people involved, they told me the names and everything else was an afterthought. When they told me Dermot was hosting, that elevated it. I just knew it was going to be something really special, and the format is so original.

Seann: There's nothing like it. As a stand-up you're used to going out and making people laugh but usually those people want to be made to laugh, and I relished the challenge of going out there and trying to get people to laugh who are being paid £250,000 not to.

Dermot: TV channel U&Dave said to us categorically at the start, 'We don't have this money to give away,' which comes with its own unique pressure. I flip between the two and dance on both sides; I want [the entertainers] to do really well but I also want someone to come away with a bit of money. Sometimes you'll find the exact same jokes won't land the next night, so it was great watching them have to adapt.



ting NT!'

It must have been hard for the audience not wanting to let the team down...

Dermot: But that's the thing, some of them did. Halfway through it starts to change. When they walk in everybody thinks, 'We're a team', but I'd say, 'Who wants to do a link to camera for £200?' and someone would go, 'Yeah,' and you'd see everybody's faces drop.

Katherine: It's a really interesting social experiment about being for the collective or for the individual. People wanted a little second of fame, people knew they would get a bit of camera time if they laughed.

Seann: That element of the audience turning on each other, we didn't see that coming. The break they have where they're allowed to talk, we thought that would be just to give them a break and then they start screaming at each other, 'Why did you give the money away?!'

Dermot: Strangers! They shout at each other, 'What do you mean you just gave away £10,000 to have a heavily pixellated Robbie Williams sing *Angels* to you?'

It's not just comedians. What were some of the more bizarre acts that are on the show?

Katherine: There was a baby race. We got people's babies, we stuck numbers to them, and we raced them. There's so much variety. We wanted to train the audience to expect the unexpected, keep them on their toes, make them quite anxious and create tension. Some people will find a baby race really funny, we had to keep hitting them with something new. We tried pyrotechnics, snakes, spiders, nudity.

Seann: It's not just about making them laugh, it's about getting any kind of reaction whether it be shock, fear, sadness.

Dermot: Before we'd get people on as punters, we'd set something up with their mum or dad or a long-lost relative. There's a mother and daughter and we had Magic Mike come out and dance and at the last minute the dad came out and did a routine. He was properly giving it his all and the daughter's just sitting there like [head in hands].

Seann: With the variety of acts we send out, it feels like you're getting more than one show. You're getting a couple of dozen shows squished into one, that's the fun of it. The audience don't know what they're going to get, which means the viewer doesn't know what they're going to get. It's fantastic to watch.

Host Dermot O'Leary

Can a cute doggy get the grins going?

Would you have been team players if you were in the audience?

Katherine: You watch the audience adapt to what kind of audience members they were. If the money was getting taken off and they saw other people turning, then they would lose faith that they would walk out with any money. They came in loyal, and they would turn and start being out for themselves and taking cash for bribes. I don't think anybody can predict what kind of audience member they would be.

Seann: One guy just started taking £20 a pop. Every time he made a noise he got a score, that's how bad it got.

Dermot: People would just go crazy at him because every time he did it, they were losing £5,000 but he was only getting £20. He's there like, 'I don't give a s**t,' he walked out with £200. I like to think I'd be part of the team. We do this thing with a conveyor belt [of prizes] and I didn't even finish the sentence, I said, 'A four-night stay…' and this girl was like 'Yeah!' It could have been anywhere!

Katherine: Your mother-in-law's house!

Fatiha, Seann and Katherine try to get a reaction from the crowd

What's your relationship with silence like?

Katherine: I love it. When I'm on tour away from my family, I just won't speak all day, I love it.

Dermot: Same, I talk out loud for a living which I love but then you realise quite often that a lot of people are getting bored of the sound of your voice.

● *Silence is Golden, Monday 5 May, U&Dave*

By Samuel McManus, **Pictures** UKTV

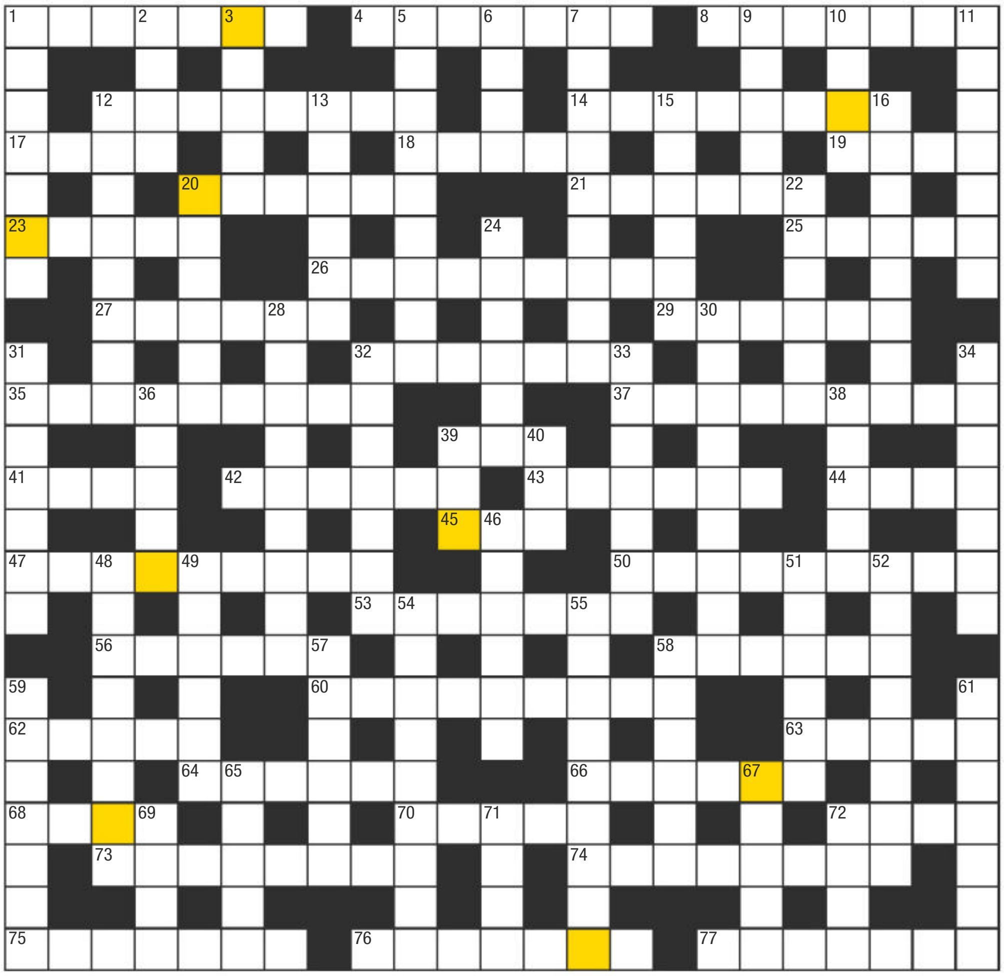
Puzzles

YOU could be in with a chance of winning £200

PRIZE crossword

WIN £200

Solve the crossword to find, reading from top to bottom in the shaded squares, the name of an actor and film-maker. This is your competition entry answer. See the 'How to enter' panel, below right.



Across

1 Duke's female counterpart (7)

4 Leafy green vegetable loved by Popeye! (7)

8 Par for the course (7)

12 Clover-like emblem of Ireland (8)

14 Global computer network (8)

17 Tiny amount (4)

18 Sue ---, J R Ewing's first wife in *Dallas* (5)

19 Vampire's tooth? (4)

20 --- Swift, US music superstar (6)

21 Across

21 Andi ---, broadcaster and host of *Great British Menu*, pictured above (6)

23 Adele hit – or a Lionel Richie classic! (5)

25 Last Greek letter (5)

26 Making tidy, straightening (up) (9)

27 Choosing (6)

29 Verse of a poem (6)

32 Boiled with rage (7)

35 Domestic appliance for pressing clothes (5,4)

37 Springtime chocolate treat (6,3)

39 Bash for a bride-to-be, --- party (3)

41 Frosted (a cake) (4)

42 French word for 'Darling' (6)

43 Star of 2025 comedy horror *The Monkey*, --- Wood (6)

44 Brother of Cain? (4)

45 Rodent (3)

47 Meat-based sauce for spaghetti (9)

50 Minor alteration or correction (9)

53 --- thinking, creative or indirect approach to solving problems (7)

56 --- *Fair*, novel by William Makepeace Thackeray (6)

58 Military command to relax (2,4)

60 Battle at which Henry V and his army defeated the French in 1415 (9)

62 Metric weight unit (5)

63 Saturn's largest moon (5)

64 --- *Man*, Elton John song (6)

66 County in Northern Ireland (6)

68 Long arduous journey (4)

70 Planet's path (5)

72 Straw vote? (4)

73 Warning of imminent danger (3,5)

74 Surgical cut (8)

75 (Of time) Passed by (7)

76 *My Best Friend's* ---, Julia Roberts romcom (7)

77 Scientific study of animals (7)

Down

1 Jelly-like confectionary, Turkish --- (7)

2 Very funny! (2-2)

3 Lively Brazilian dance (5)

5 Lady Gaga hit (5,4)

6 --- Fielding, comedian and *Great British Bake Off* presenter (4)

7 Hooped petticoat worn in the 19th century, anagram of NICER LION (9)

9 Vigour, enthusiasm (5)

10 Coral structure (4)

11 Pithy remark (7)

12 Action film star, Sylvester --- (8)

13 Chinese tea variety (6)

15 Sci-fi series with Winona Ryder and David Harbour, *Stranger* --- (6)

16 Dip made with olives and anchovies (8)

20 Cylindrical drum (3-3)

22 --- Wood, Rolling Stones guitarist, pictured right (6)

24 Snuggle (into) (6)

28 Hitchcock movie, *North By* --- (9)

30 New or Old book of the Bible (9)

31 Plant with clusters of tiny red or white flowers, anagram of LAB SITE (7)

32 Swimmer's breathing tube (7)

33 Point separating pounds and pence (7)

34 Nimbleness (7)

36 Relating to sound (5)

38 Domain, kingdom (5)

39 That woman (3)

40 Meshed fabric (3)

46 Model business? (6)

48 Shade of violet (8)

49 Male goose (6)

51 Shortage (6)

52 Negatively charged part of atom (8)

54 Philosopher taught by Plato (9)

55 Hero worship (9)

57 'Y' in radio code (6)

58 --- Kitten, pop trio (6)

59 Status, standing (7)

61 Explanatory comparison (7)

65 Give a speech (5)

67 Enthusiasm, relish (5)

69 Retain (4)

71 Curve – in the road, eg (4)

72 Pub game played with a cue, or a place to take a dip (4)

22 Down

COMPETITION AND GIVEAWAY RULES Competitions open to residents of the UK (including Channel Islands and the Isle of Man), Eire or BFPOs, aged 18 or over, except Bauer Media employees, its affiliated companies, any promotional partners, or their families and anyone connected with the competitions. Enter by text, online or phone. No purchase necessary. Answers must be the product of own work. Unless expressly stated, travel expenses and spending money is not included. There is no cash alternative to prizes and no alternative holidays can be offered. Prizes are not transferable. No responsibility can be accepted for entries that are delayed, damaged, mislaid or wrongly delivered, or for any loss in service of the online entry mechanism or for entries lost, delayed or corrupted due to computer error in transit. Only one entry per person. A winning entry is the first correct answer drawn after the closing date. For a free entry, enter online at bellamagazine.co.uk. Prizewinners will be notified by post on headed paper or by official email. The results are published. Winners must agree to the publication of their names, age and photos. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into. Your information will only be used to administer promotions in accordance with our privacy policy. Entry implies acceptance of these rules. Promoter: H Bauer Publishing. Full T&Cs can be found at bauerlegal.co.uk/competition-terms.html

Crossword Neil Locker. **Pictures** Shutterstock

Sudoku

Fill in the blank squares with the numbers 1 to 9 so that each row, each column and each smaller 3x3 block contains all the numbers from 1 to 9.

EASY

4					9	8	7	
				7		5		6
					6		1	2
			3					1
3	5						9	4
1					8			
6	9		8					
8		7		5				
	3	4	6					8

HARD

	5		9					
							7	
	4	9		5				1
4	2	6			3			
		8	5		9	3		
			2			8	1	4
8				3		1	6	
	3							
					1		8	

Take A Break Sudoku magazine, containing over 80 fun-to-solve puzzles, is on sale now.

PRIZE Arrowword

WIN £200

Solve the clues, writing your answers in the directions shown by the arrows, to reveal, reading down the shaded squares, the name of the town in Greater Manchester where Michelle Keegan was born. This is your competition entry answer. See the 'How to enter' panel below.

3-D square?	▼	Road-surfacing material	Upper Thames	▼	Queen of Egypt	Irish county	▼	Crossing feature, Belisha ---	▼	Toronto's country	Sports trophies	Liquid measure	▼	Film director, --- Anderson
Make use of	▶	▼	▼			▼		Gangway	▶		▼	▼		Of sound mind
Foundation	▶		▨		Garden grass	▶				Snake's noise	▶			▼
↳								Mine entrance	▶			▨	Ancient Peruvian	
Occurring every so often	Holyrood worker? (1,1,1)	▶			Not bad!	▶				--- *Brockovich*, movie	▶		▼	
Unabridged	Lupita ---, actress		Soon	▶		▨		Choreographer, --- Phillips	▶					
↳	▼									*Dune* actor, Oscar ---		--- Clooney, barrister		Gary Numan no 1
Dance, --- nova		Another name for Dog Star	Glides down the piste!							↳		▼		▨ ▼
↳		▼	▼							Seat	Adhering to Islamic dietary law		Thereby, --- facto	
'80s pop star, --- Kershaw	▶		▨	Bell chimes						↳	▼		▼	
Hold firmly	▶			▼						European mountain range	▶		▨	
↳					Michelle Keegan					Solid ground, --- firma		Hitchcock thriller, *The ---*		Indian currency unit
Composure	Elite public school		Oh dear – I did it again!		Medicinal plant	▼	Weasel-like animal	Join the ---, puzzle for kids	Small drum	▶ ▼		▼		▼
↳	▼		▨ ▼		▼			▼	Biblical priest	▶			Years old	
Bleakly empty		Norway's capital	▶				Paddle	▶			Knock	▨ ▶	▼	
↳				Hops kiln	▶				*Barnaby* ---, novel by Dickens	▶				
Minestrone, eg		Fat in dumplings	▶			▨	*Chandelier* singer	▶			Notice	▶		

SOLUTIONS

Sudoku solutions can be found online now at bellamagazine.co.uk

ISSUE 15
PRIZE ANSWERS
Crossword
Ariana Grande
Arrowword
Beekeeper

Full solutions to this week's prize puzzles can be found at bellamagazine.co.uk after the closing date: 12 May 2025

HOW TO ENTER THE PRIZE COMPETITIONS

BY PHONE: 0901 130 0237

When asked for the issue number, key in 17. Calls cost 50p per call, plus your network access charge. (UK readers only.) You must be 18 or over and have the bill payer's permission.

BY TEXT: 65115

Text BEL17 then a space followed by your name, house number or name, your postcode, then your answer(s), all separated by a space, to 65115, eg Jane Smith 10 SL5 9JN Answer(s). Texts cost 50p plus your standard network rate. Keep texts under 160 characters or you may be charged for more than one text.

- If you enter after the closing date, you will not be entered but may be charged. Not available in Eire. Please ensure your entry is completed correctly, as incorrect entries may be charged but not entered. This is not a subscription service.
- **You are automatically consenting to receive further communications about these competitions from us via SMS text. You can opt out of this at any time by texting STOP to 65115. This will be charged** at your standard network rate, but you will need to do this each time you enter the competition by text. Your personal data will (regardless of whether you opt out) always be used to process your entry. For further information, see general terms and privacy policy at Bauerdatapromise.co.uk.
- Lines close at 11.59pm on 12 May 2025.

Phone UK SP: Spoke (0333 202 3390). Text SP: Bauer Media. Email smshelp@bauermedia.co.uk or call 0330 159 2525.

OR ENTER ONLINE:
Bellamagazine.co.uk

Continued over the page...

Puzzles contin

BITS & PIECES

We've taken a completed crossword puzzle and cut it up to give 24 pieces. Your task is to rebuild the puzzle with the help of the piece that we've already placed in the grid.

E	A	R									
X	■	A									
I	N	T									

M	E	T
U	■	T
R	O	Y

■	W	■
W	E	L
A	■	U

■	■	■
L	O	C
E	■	A

O	L	I
S	■	■
S	T	A

G	H	T
E	■	H
N	C	E

E	■	T
■	J	E
M	■	■

T	O	P
■	■	E
T	O	R

A	D	J
C	■	■
T	O	G

R	O	P
■	O	■
A	L	■

■	L	■
S	I	L
■	G	■

~~E~~	~~A~~	~~R~~
~~X~~	■	~~A~~
~~I~~	~~N~~	~~T~~

■	N	I
■	E	■
I	G	E

U	S	T
G	■	Y
A	■	L

T	■	P
A	X	E
R	■	P

I	■	O
V	I	A
E	■	T

R	■	S
I	■	T
S	L	A

I	■	F
E	N	T
■	■	■

T	T	E
■	O	■
R	A	N

T	A	N
E	■	C
R	C	H

■	D	■
U	S	T
■	T	■

■	■	F
N	G	■
O	■	S

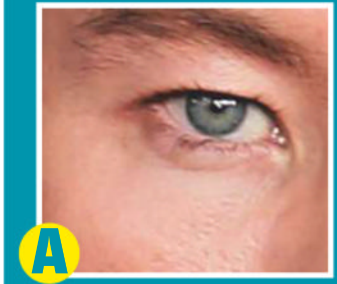
W	I	G
■	■	O
E	L	L

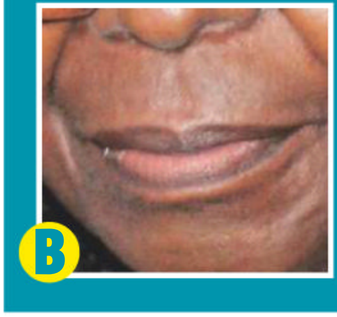
M	E	N
■	N	■
A	T	E

S	■	I
T	H	O
■	I	■

GUESS THE CELEB

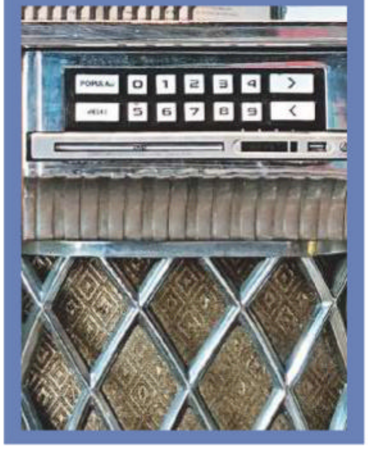
Can you name these stars by seeing close ups of their famous faces?


A


B

WHAT ON EARTH?

Can you guess what everyday object this super zoomed in photo shows?



ued...

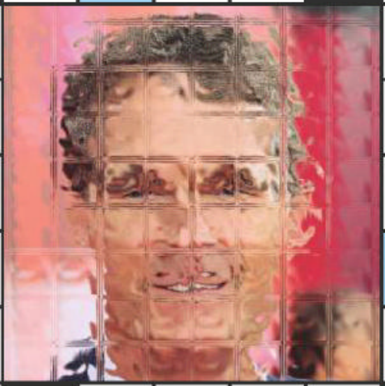
ROUND SUM

Work out the solution to the sum by following the instructions contained within the arrow.

4
x7
÷4
DOUBLE IT
+12
HALVE IT
-10
x8
+16
÷4
☐

CODEBREAKER

When you've solved this codebreaker, the identity of our disguised celebrity will be revealed in the shaded squares. Then, the same code will help you complete the lower grid and read a mystery fact about them.

■	21	■	9	21	17	21	18	26	14	21	23	■	11	■
■	20	■	26	■	■	6	■	25	■	■	26	■	24	■
7	15	3	10	■	13	21	6	21	18	■	26	5	21	22
■	9	■	8	■	15	■	■	1	■	■	16	■	11	■
25	21	12	■	■	4	19	17	21	■	24	■	1 S	2 K	3 I
19	■	21	8	21						19	22	12	■	22
23	■	20	■	12						23	■	23	■	13
2	21	12	11	24						19	9	3	21	15
3	■	15	■	3						1	■	2	■	23
22	■	19	23	11						1	24	21	■	21
4	21	18	■	1	■	9	26	1	21	■	■	23	26	9
■	7	■	10	■	■	21	■	■	18	■	2	■	22	■
16	15	5	21	■	1	14	21	19	2	■	3	25	3	1
■	3	■	1	■	■	26	■	1	■	■	22	■	26	■
■	14	■	12	6	3	12	11	24	3	22	4	■	22	■

A B C D E F G H ~~I~~ J
~~K~~ L M N O P Q R ~~S~~
T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
S	K	I										
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

5	19	9	21	■	19	■	11	3	12	3	10	21	22	’	1	■	19	23	23	21	1	12
				■		■								,		■						

26	16	■	19	■	22	26	12	12	3	22	4	■	24	3	18	18	■	18	26	26	12	21	23
		■		■								■					■						

Pictures Shutterstock

Continued over the page...

Puzzles contin

SHOW ME THE BAY TO GO HOME

Don't let this search all about car parks drive you to distraction!

L	O	N	G	S	T	A	Y	Z	G	N	I	S	R	E	V	E	R	S	R	A	C	G	J	K	C
L	W	B	D	X	P	A	E	V	F	Y	E	C	S	H	A	O	E	X	I	T	S	I	M	N	Q
E	G	A	R	D	A	O	R	L	U	C	D	H	O	S	D	N	U	O	R	G	R	E	D	N	U
N	N	E	P	T	U	I	O	L	A	W	C	O	R	A	I	I	M	L	B	P	A	E	N	T	I
I	E	T	A	H	T	C	T	P	O	A	O	O	E	L	S	N	G	O	I	E	A	L	O	U	D
F	T	I	R	R	E	N	S	I	T	A	T	L	E	E	A	A	C	P	C	T	O	B	S	N	M
F	Y	D	K	Y	T	O	I	A	R	S	D	T	F	L	B	N	E	I	Y	A	W	K	L	A	W
S	A	E	A	V	N	O	T	S	T	R	I	I	E	R	L	G	N	T	C	R	E	V	I	R	D
S	I	U	N	R	O	P	L	D	S	H	K	M	N	N	E	E	L	C	L	I	A	U	E	R	L
H	U	E	D	B	W	G	U	P	W	C	T	R	S	G	D	V	A	I	E	F	A	N	E	E	R
Y	S	I	R	M	L	H	M	S	E	D	A	E	N	N	B	A	O	U	S	F	E	H	T	U	R
C	I	F	I	E	R	U	C	I	L	B	U	P	O	A	A	A	N	U	T	E	N	S	D	T	Q
L	E	B	D	N	H	G	T	T	S	O	C	M	P	A	Y	I	Y	T	A	O	R	N	S	A	R
I	T	U	E	D	O	D	I	P	A	O	A	L	M	V	S	H	R	S	N	Y	M	E	R	C	G
W	H	E	E	L	C	L	A	M	P	R	N	A	M	A	I	T	E	T	D	O	L	A	D	T	U
F	E	E	N	I	C	E	R	S	E	L	C	Y	C	R	O	T	O	M	S	R	I	A	T	S	L
O	P	P	Y	A	T	S	T	R	O	H	S	S	D	R	A	L	L	O	B	E	S	R	B	E	E
S	M	R	A	L	A	R	A	C	I	N	F	O	R	M	A	T	I	O	N	N	D	A	T	R	D
K	A	S	I	T	W	L	G	N	H	O	C	A	S	E	U	N	R	I	D	O	R	E	Y	I	N
M	D	T	A	P	S	I	E	C	R	L	E	S	T	B	A	R	O	E	I	M	U	E	P	I	F

ATTENDANT
AUTOMATED
BICYCLE STAND
BOLLARDS
CAR ALARMS
CARS
DISABLED BAYS
DRIVER
ENTRY
EXIT
FINE
INFORMATION
LOADING BAY
LONG STAY
MACHINE
MOTORCYCLES
MULTISTOREY
NO SPACES
OVERFLOW
PARK AND RIDE
PEDESTRIANS
PERMIT
PUBLIC
QUEUE
REVERSING
ROAD RAGE
SCHOOL
SCRATCH
SHORT STAY
SPEED HUMPS
STAIRS
TARIFF
UNDERGROUND
WALKWAY
WHEEL CLAMP
WHITE LINES

ued...

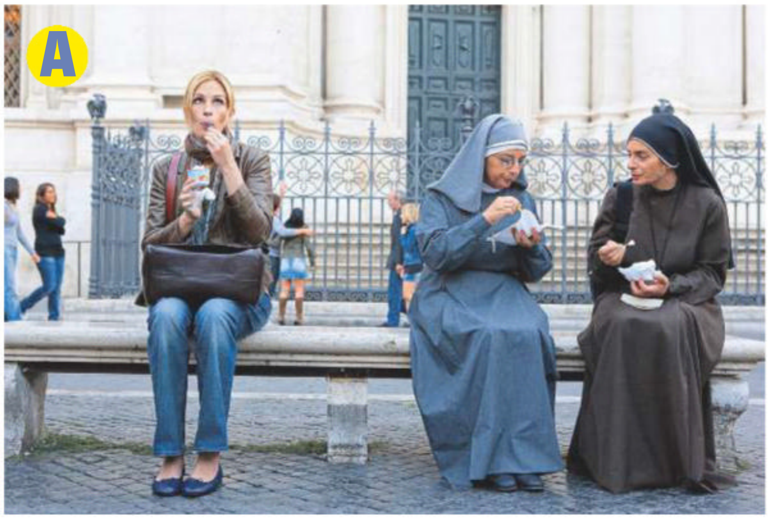
KILLER SUDOKU

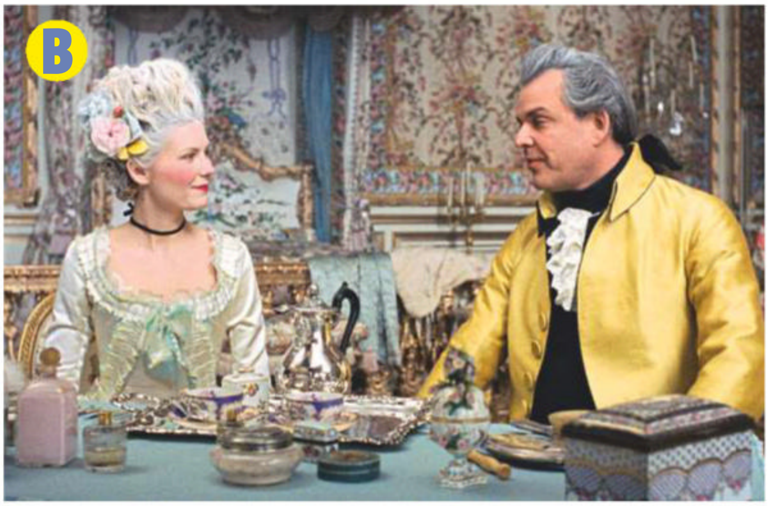
Killer Sudoku is based on the traditional sudoku grid and every column, every row and every 3x3 box must contain the digits 1 to 9. But there's a twist – the dotted squares must be filled with numbers that add up to that in the left corner.

4	7	3	17	15	9	5	8	10
3		6				7		
6	17		6		3	15		
	7			9	14	8	10	
14		12					10	
8	8		4	18	10	17	6	5
16	9		7					
	3		8		9	4	16	
	9	8		1		6	3	5

GUESS THE MOVIE

Can you name these famous films from looking at just one scene?





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THIS WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

BITS & PIECES

E	A	R	W	I	G		N	I	G	H	T
X		A			O		E		E		H
I	N	T	E	L	L	I	G	E	N	C	E
S		I			F		L		I		F
T	H	O	N	G		S	I	L	E	N	T
	I		O		S		G				
A	D	J	U	S	T	M	E	N	T		P
C			G		Y		N		A	X	E
T	O	G	A		L	A	T	E	R		P
I		O	T	T	E	R		S	T	O	P
V	I	A		O		I		T			E
E		T	R	A	N	S	L	A	T	O	R
				D		E		T		W	
L	O	C	U	S	T		J	E	W	E	L
E		A		T		M			A		U
M	E	T	R	O	P	O	L	I	T	A	N
U		T		O		S			E		C
R	O	Y	A	L		S	T	A	R	C	H

GUESS THE CELEB

A Barry Keoghan
B Whoopi Goldberg

WHAT ON EARTH?

Jukebox

ROUND SUM

10

CODEBREAKER

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
S	K	I	G	M	W	Q	Y	D	Z	C	T	J
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
P	U	F	V	L	A	X	E	N	R	H	B	O

	E		D	E	V	E	L	O	P	E	R		C	
	X		O			W		B			O		H	
Q	U	I	Z		J	E	W	E	L		O	M	E	N
	D		Y		U			S			F		C	
B	E	T			G	A	V	E		H		S	K	I
A		E	Y	E						A	N	T		N
R		X		T						R		R		J
K	E	T	C	H						A	D	I	E	U
I		U		I						S		K		R
N		A	R	C						S	H	E		E
G	E	L		S		D	O	S	E			R	O	D
	Q		Z			E			L		K		N	
F	U	M	E		S	P	E	A	K		I	B	I	S
	I		S			O		S			N		O	
	P		T	W	I	T	C	H	I	N	G		N	

Celebrity Dan Snow **Fact** Made a citizen's arrest of a Notting Hill looter.

WORDSEARCH

L	O	N	G	S	T	A	Y	Z	G	N	I	S	R	E	V	E	R	S	R	A	C	G	J	K	C
L	W	B	D	X	P	A	E	V	F	Y	E	C	S	H	A	O	E	X	I	T	S	I	M	N	Q
E	G	A	R	D	A	O	R	L	U	C	D	H	O	S	D	N	U	O	R	G	R	E	D	N	U
N	N	E	P	T	U	I	O	L	A	W	C	O	R	A	I	I	M	L	B	P	A	E	N	T	I
I	E	T	A	H	T	C	T	P	O	A	O	O	E	L	S	N	G	O	I	E	A	L	O	U	D
F	T	I	R	R	E	N	S	I	T	A	T	L	E	E	A	A	C	P	C	T	O	B	S	N	M
F	Y	D	K	Y	T	O	I	A	R	S	D	T	F	L	B	N	E	I	Y	A	W	K	L	A	W
S	A	E	A	V	N	O	T	S	T	R	I	I	E	R	L	G	N	T	C	R	E	V	I	R	D
S	I	U	N	R	O	P	L	D	S	H	K	M	N	N	E	E	L	C	L	I	A	U	E	R	L
H	U	E	D	B	W	G	U	P	W	C	T	R	S	G	D	V	A	I	E	F	A	N	E	E	R
Y	S	I	R	M	L	H	M	S	E	D	A	E	N	N	B	A	O	U	S	F	E	H	T	U	R
C	I	F	I	E	R	U	C	I	L	B	U	P	O	A	A	A	N	U	T	E	N	S	D	T	Q
L	E	B	D	N	H	G	T	T	S	O	C	M	P	A	Y	I	Y	T	A	O	R	N	S	A	R
I	T	U	E	D	O	D	I	P	A	O	A	L	M	V	S	H	R	S	N	Y	M	E	R	C	G
W	H	E	E	L	C	L	A	M	P	R	N	A	M	A	I	T	E	T	D	O	L	A	D	T	U
F	E	E	N	I	C	E	R	S	E	L	C	Y	C	R	O	T	O	M	S	R	I	A	T	S	L
O	P	P	Y	A	T	S	T	R	O	H	S	S	D	R	A	L	L	O	B	E	S	R	B	E	E
S	M	R	A	L	A	R	A	C	I	N	F	O	R	M	A	T	I	O	N	N	D	A	T	R	D
K	A	S	I	T	W	L	G	N	H	O	C	A	S	E	U	N	R	I	D	O	R	E	Y	I	N
M	D	T	A	P	S	I	E	C	R	L	E	S	T	B	A	R	O	E	I	M	U	E	P	I	F

KILLER SUDOKU

4	7	3	9	6	2	5	8	1
2	1	6	8	5	7	3	4	9
5	8	9	1	4	3	2	7	6
1	3	4	5	9	6	7	2	8
9	5	7	3	2	8	1	6	4
8	6	2	4	7	1	9	5	3
6	4	5	7	3	9	8	1	2
3	2	1	6	8	5	4	9	7
7	9	8	2	1	4	6	3	5

GUESS THE MOVIE

A Eat Pray Love
B Marie Antoinette

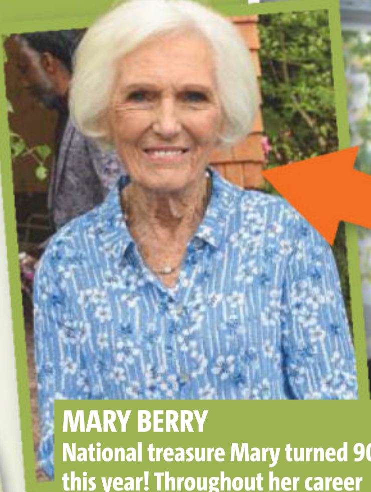
*NB for Prize Puzzles information, see page 53

Ageing like fine wine!

Check out these celeb chefs now versus a few decades ago

STAURANT
92

PRUE LEITH
Prue, 85, opened her Michelin-starred restaurant in Notting Hill in 1969 and became a judge on *The Great British Bake Off* in 2017.



MARY BERRY
National treasure Mary turned 90 this year! Throughout her career she's been a recipe tester, a food editor, a *Bake Off* judge and hosted many of her own shows.

JAMIE OLIVER
The fresh-faced chef, 49, became a household name on *The Naked Chef* in 1999, and he now has 24 best-selling cookbooks.

NIGELLA LAWSON
Nigella, 65, released *How to Eat*, the first of many books in 1998. The next year she hosted her own cookery show, which she still does these days.

GORDON RAMSAY
Gordon, 58, worked for Marco Pierre White in the '80s and now owns a group of restaurants.

By Amy Lo **Pictures** Getty, Shutterstock, Instagram

Keep a Messenger from Heaven
forever close to your heart...

Messenger Of Love

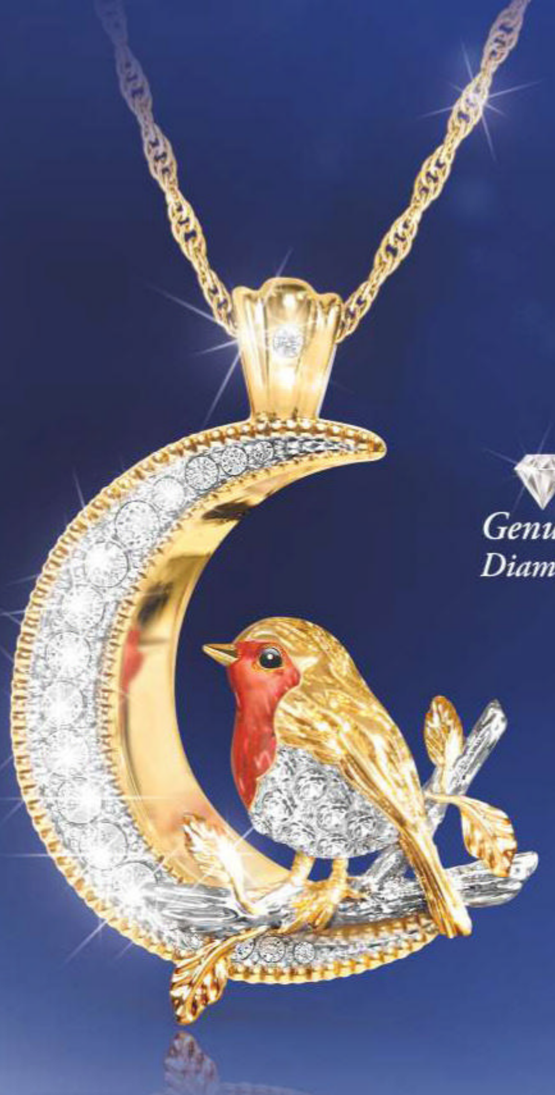
DIAMOND PENDANT

24-Carat Gold-Plating

Glittering Diamond

Crystal & Rhodium Pavé

A visit from a robin
means we're never far apart.
My spirit lives forever
deep within your heart...



Just as the moon waxes and wanes and time passes, the love for a lost one remains eternal. It's said that a visit from a robin means that a loved one is visiting from heaven. Keep a symbol of eternal remembrance close to your heart with the *'Messenger Of Love' Diamond Robin Moon Pendant* – a first-of-a-kind, exclusive to The Bradford Exchange.

A UNIQUE DESIGN WITH 24-CARAT GOLD-PLATING, GENUINE CRYSTALS, RHODIUM & A GENUINE DIAMOND

Depicting an elegant moon crescent design, this handcrafted pendant is plated in rich 24-carat gold. An exquisitely crafted 24-carat gold-plated robin with enamel red-breast perches upon 24-carat gold-plated branches, accented with crystal and precious rhodium pavé, whilst the bale glimmers with a sparkling genuine 1pt diamond. The pendant reverse is meticulously engraved with the sentiment: *'Messenger of Love'* and two delightful decorative hearts. For the perfect finishing touch, the pendant includes a 24-carat gold plated 18-inch chain with 2 inch extender chain.

DON'T MISS OUT – ORDER YOUR PENDANT TODAY!

A symbol of everlasting love, this ladies' jewellery is accompanied by a custom-designed presentation case, a Poem Card and our 120-day money-back guarantee. It is available for just 4 interest-free instalments of £24.99 – that's only £99.96 (plus £6.99 S&S)*. Pay nothing now – simply complete and return the Priority Order Form today!

Shown larger than actual size. Pendant measures 1.1 inches (3 cm) from top of bale to base of moon. Chain measures 18 inches (45.7 cm) in length with a 2 inch (5 cm) extender.

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Messenger of love

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FASTEST WAY TO ORDER
www.bradford.co.uk/robinmoonpendant

***Or call on* 0333 003 0019**

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and quote reference code 456190

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Complete today or Call 0333 003 0019

Title.................. Name...
(PLEASE PRINT)

Address ....

....

Postcode................................ Phone...

Email Address..

Applicants must be aged 18 or over. Please note, we may contact you via mail, email and mobile with information about your reservation. For details of our privacy policy, please go to www.bradford.co.uk/privacypolicy or contact us at the above address or phone number.

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